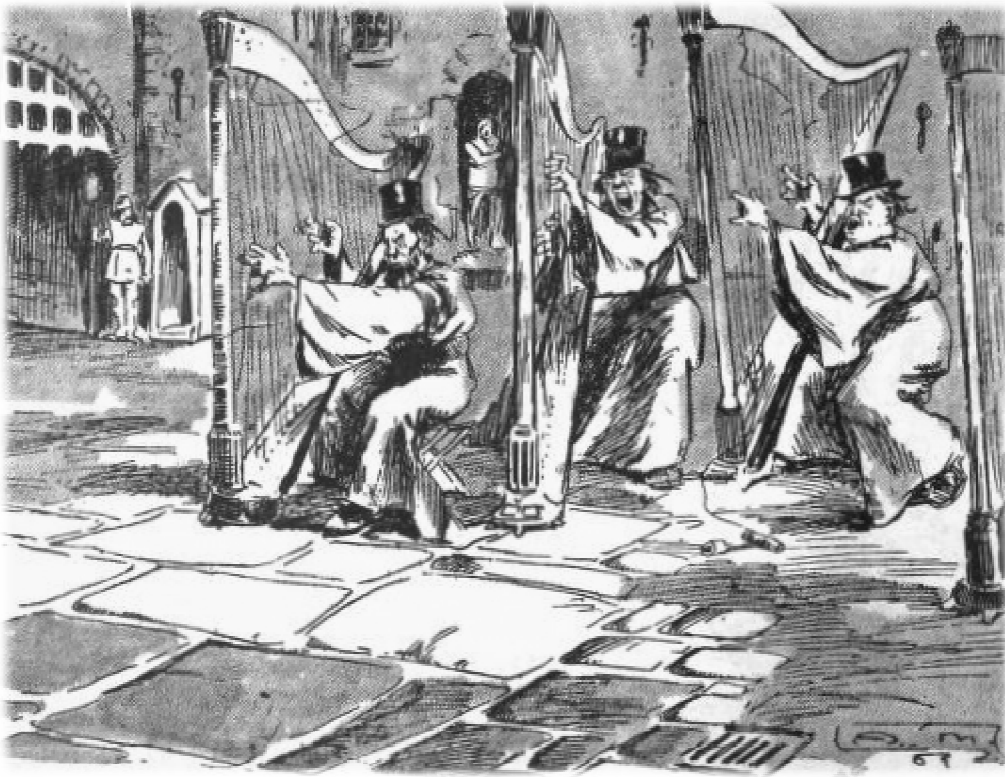


XIII



a dead spot of light...

Introduction

Not so many reviews this time ... but the amount of length of the interviews is surely able to compensate for this. Maybe the aspect of the incident referred to in the introduction of the 12th edition still left its mark and prevented me from writing more pieces on the music. On the other side, the weather is fine currently and I am enjoying the time outside rather than in front of a computer monitor right now. No, I am not too fond of laptops, so both aspects cannot be combined.

Some new stuff was added to the magazine and some older makes a re-appearance. As I was a bit too lazy – not to mention lacked inspiration – to write some poems myself, I thought I add some to the magazine again. Especially the American poet Emily Dickinson is someone whose works has fascinated me considerably over the course of the last months. I found out about her through a discussion of her works on the homepage of the Nation Magazine and when I bought a book, which contains a series of her poems, I was actually stunned by her writing and the beauty of her poetry. Yes, you can find a considerable amount of references to the Christian mythology in her writings, but I would encourage you to look beyond this.

The first interview in this magazine is of a length that might surprise and I doubt that I will have a similar one again soon. Rostau had a lot to communicate and for those who are interested in their music might want to turn back to the 8th edition of this magazine, because it was there that I wrote a review on their music.

Depthfrost and Rostau have something in common: both have ceased to be. Luckily, in both cases has a band-member been interested in an interview, so you can get a small insight into bands that have already passed by.

This time several short reviews were added towards the end of this magazine and this has a reason: The time to write on them in more depth was simply impossible due to time constraints. As such, a small and short glimpse was presented. Longer version will either appear on the 14th instalment of this magazine or on the Metal Archives entry.

Another small thing:

I do not edit the interviews. They are submitted in the way that I receive them. All that I do is making them more 'appealing' to the eye but nothing more. I do not correct the spelling errors and such... and I will never do this. Pro-mags might do this, but this underground thing delivers the stuff in a raw and unpolished way.

And as I do not want to write this every time in every freaking interview:

I would like to thank every band and label for the promotion material, answer and so on. And thank you for the moral support and nice e-mails ... appreciated!

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Contact:

Oneyoudontknow at yahoo dot de

All the best ...
oneyoudontknow

Furthermore:

Due to recent events in the US-American town Joplin, it was devastated by a tornado, the situation regarding Reality Impaired Records, Underworld Relativity Records as well as the band Freakflag remain unclear at the current point. I hope all of the persons behind the labels and bands are fine. Also the contact with the band Mafu Mafu – see the 12th edition – is rather difficult. I hope all you 'bastards' are well and have not suffered harm in any way.

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A very long opening interview

Rostau

Another interview with a band from Italy. The music scene – not only the metal one – has a lot to offer and by this I do not mean stuff like Eros Ramazzotti. So, how are you? Do you think I should cover even more bands from your country?

Hi oneyoudontknow, thanks for this opportunity. I think we're all fine..I'm not in close touch with one of the members but I don't have reasons to imagine things are going otherwise than "fine", and hope it too. I'll clear out this in the next question... anyway, as for the italian bands, I must confess that I've lost contact with the musical scene (any musical scene, in fact, not just the italian one) in 2005/2006 due to personal life evolution. I can point out just a bunch of names, the first my mind recalls : first of all Ras Algethi, a great inspiration with it's demo "Oblita Divinitas" (1993), in which one of our members played. Anyone who likes funeral doom should listen to that demo, it's unique and seminal. Then Enoch, funeral doom band in which two of our members played too. Another really good italian doom act is Malasangre. One band i listened to recently was Black Land, psychedelic stoner/doom. And let's not forget Ovszum... sick black/drone/doom.

Obviously there's not just doom in the peninsula, but to throw in random names forgetting other good ones I can't recall wouldn't be fair, so I skip any further mentioning. I make an exception for Diorrhoea, a grindcore band composed of talented personal friends, who often travel Europe devastating the audience with their musical fury, and who helped me with my musical projects many times.

Would you mind introducing the members a bit and what are your/their 'original' bands?

The "I" speaking in this interview is Giulio. I'll just tell that I'm a guy between 20 and 30 years old living in a small town in the countryside, who spreads his interests towards way too many topics, never being able to focus and go deeply, and tries to catch the meaning and dynamics of reality. No small task, with it's joys and sorrows. I have another band, "Distruzione di Massa", a Death/Grind solo project. Also, I have a second project with the members of Rostau, named "Zerfall". It's about old school death/doom, with a particular use of keyboards.

The other members are my older brother Silvio, who has a clever, adaptive eye towards what happens around him and a way sharper skill to understand than mine. Nowadays he's living around the world gaining experience. He played drums in Ras Algethi, Enoch, Albireo and other bands.

Finally there's Leo, a friend at first of my brother and then also mine. He's a talented keyboard player with a nice sense of humor, and he played in many bands : nowadays in Enoch, and probably other projects I don't know anything about. Both Silvio and Leo played with me in the Zerfall project.

What does Rostau refer to? From what I could make out it somehow deals with some secret rooms or pathways below the sphinx and the pyramids of Giza.

Rostau's translation is more or less "Mouth of the Passages". It's concept is that of the gate to the Duat, an afterlife realm in the ancient egyptian religion. It should be a place both in our world and in a region of the star sky. There are a lot of theories about it's existence in the form of chambers and corridors under the sphynx, as well as relating them to some



secret chamber containing power or technology long lost. On another hand, it could be related to the way the Great Pyramid worked, as related to the journey of a soul. In these last years the topic has become one of those chaotic ones in which one unorthodox side arguments important revelations against the other one, that of the official academy and it's literature. It's hard to form a true position as most of the proposed arguments are physically beyond direct verification by the reader, or too technical to be seriously examined. In example, I certainly don't know the ancient egyptian language anyway deeply (or superficially), so I have to take most of the data in the debate as it's offered.

Anyway, the sheer concept inside that interpretation of the term "Rostau", that of gate, passage and related to the trascendental, sufficiently symbolizes what the musical project wants to suggest.

What made you start Rostau and why did you release only this one album? As three members are involved and due to the peculiar nature of the project it seems natural to ask whether you all knew each other and have founded the band together?

Well, Rostau started as the first tries on my first guitar. I think it was 2003, in the warm, hugging gloom of the room I had in my parents' house. I had absolutely no technique, I just had this bulky instrument in hand and a whirlwind of "things" to express inside. I really didn't expect what I would have brought forth. I started playing the strings and tapping them, enjoying the sound, and began choosing what notes were good after the others, which rythms suited.. and so, after many randomly delayed days, I ended up with the first riff of "Celestial Hive Mind". I had no idea that one day it would have the form one can hear today on the cd. In fact, I didn't even expect it to develope and mix with other riffs to create a song. It was just a personal creation. Even if I knew it had absolutely no tecnical value for anyone who could actually play a guitar, it was simply touching and moving me. I found it beautiful, and highly "mine". Rostau was born that days, and it developed in the same way : I wanted to express myself for my personal enjoyment, so I continued trying, stringing one note after another, finding new sounds that touched me as mine and beautiful. The strange thing is that at that time I listened to very little doom metal. That was a death, brutal and grind time of my life.

When i composed the riffs of the first demo of my other musical project, Distruzione di Massa, I just imagined and played them in my head, then recorded them by voice (the results would be really comic if anyone other than me could listen them : beyond Impaled Northern Moon Forest). Finally I transposed them patiently in notes and produced midi files, which i sent along with tabs to my fellows musicians. In some way, however, the first Rostau sound was what I came to express directly with a guitar in hand.

The lack of any lesson with the instrument also influenced deeply my approach to music : I had no



rules or scheme to what was and was not to do. The first riff in "Ahriman" was born just because one day I discovered that the last two strings created a neat vibration in a certain combination. I remember I stayed full minutes playing just those two notes, picking one string, then another, then the first, than the other, and so, and so, and so on. Even if the amplifier I was playing in was (and still is) a discount 15watt gadget, which came with the 100€ ebay guitar, I was wrapped in the sound. Then I began trying note combinations on the same frame, and the riff came to be.

Another example of this is the first riff of "to die..". I tap no string with the fingers, just pick them. Any guitarist would probably say that i'm just not playing the instrument that way.. and in a certain sense they would be right. But hey! it worked. 3.33.333 was born taking this concept of indirect guitar playing to the extreme. I won't repeat here the precise genesis of that song, it's written in detail in one section of the website.

So, to gloriously return to your question after this trip, Rostau had a long gestation before seeing daylight. Riffs accumulated, ideas developed, and "Celestial Hive Mind" guitars were completed. In 2004, after coming back from a summer festival in Germany, one day I felt like writing some lyrics for it. Then, with still little voice after the round of concerts (viewed, not performed!), I recorded a first preview of what that lyric could effectively sound on the track. The singing style was natural due to my throat conditions.. and sounded pleasing. So pleasing, despite it needed some refining work, that I kept it.

All these boring anecdotes are to point out why we released only one album and how three members were involved : "To die and to the Stars Ascend" was thought and recorded across years, grew with me, and had not been intended for publication till the last stages of its elaboration. I produced some music to express myself, that's all. Eventually, people who listened to it convinced me that it had potential, and it could be turned into a real album. A unique and non-conventional one. So I asked my brother Silvio and Leo to help me out with keyboards, to compose and record them. I knew that albums relying on the ideas from just one mind are somehow limited. Far more magic is generated from the clash of different wills. I asked them this perhaps in late 2006 or the beginning of 2007, and we recorded in the last days of August, after 3.33.333 had already made its appearance. The keyboard sounds are modified excerpts of that song. By this time also my ideas about the world changed, and they did it drastically in March 2007. After the recording of the album I developed the artwork, joining together the various "ideological" aspects that had sedimented through the years in the project, and gave them unity.

There's some tension in the album, being it the compression in a single piece of different and sometimes opposing forces. Just to say one or two, the low fi, analogic, old school sound of guitars and vocals joined with the digital and "mathematical" sound of the keyboards, or the union of a fictional, sci-fi fantasy elements such as Warhammer 40k and numerologic, philosophical, historical and esoteric hints. This tension symbolizes my personal evolution, while the unique recording and processing circumstances generated the sound of the album. Both these factors cannot be reproduced. So the hypothetical next Rostau album would not be anyway similar to the first one. People put albums under the same band name in comparison, building up hit parades, that in this specific case would be pointless. It would be the same as to assign a mark and make a chart of life stages : any one of them had its context, its causes, its synchronous and diachronic meaning. That doesn't mean that the inspiration behind Rostau will produce no more. Perhaps we'll have to wait another 5 years or more, but it could emerge again and show up under another name.

On your homepage you have written that the music has been recorded over the span over several years. I wonder how you keep the attention and the interest over such a long period. Was it difficult to motivate yourself to proceed with this project? Did you ever reach a point in which it all became too much and you just wanted to get it over with?

I anticipated something about this question in the preceding one : I had no need to keep attention, to focus, as it was a personal search, a personal enjoyment. Also, as I said before I'm not one who keeps for too long or too deeply on something without feeling the urge to explore something else. Interest in Rostau grew or extinguished over the years, and this was perfectly acceptable as I had no pressure except the one coming from myself.. and I pleased that pressure whenever it visited me. It also had an intriguing feeling to take again something left behind with a new mind, enriched by time passing and collected experience. It let me build a more complicated structure around single simple points coming from different moments.

This changed only in the final stages of the production of the album. At some point I decided I wanted to conclude it and give it a stable, finished form. In that period I focused more, and felt some times of tiredness. The worst part was the physical production of the cd : the music was already there and, beside the thrill of giving your work birth, the sheer procedure was sometimes annoying, especially regarding the printing process of the digipack. There are many aspects, both technical and "bureaucratic", that a non-professional like me finds quite laborious. There had been many things, both musical and physical, I would have wanted to further polish, but I grew tired and went on with the final print.

Did you always had this special sound and kind of arrangement in the back of your head or did this evolve over time? What had been the original intentions behind this band or album? What was it that you wanted to create?

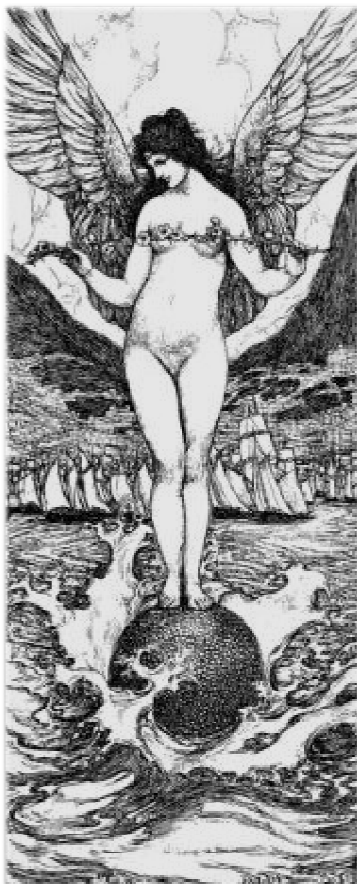
Was this that I wanted to create? that's an hard question. That's something the variuos mes through time wanted to be that way. None of them would have liked everything in the sound or the other facets of the album, but in the end I liked it very much, even with it's flaws and contradictions. Moreover, mostly the sound was compelled by the technical equipment I had at disposal : a small amplifier, a chep guitar, zero to low musicianship, a mall-quality microphone, and a pc. But I liked it, and after some audio processing I found it evocative and intimate enough.

The arrangement in particular wasn't even imaginable at the beginning of the experience. It grew as I grew, as I metabolized more music and developed new ideas in any related branch of knowledge.. literature, music, phylosophy, and so on. The keyboards especially were a very late introduction, and sprinkled from reflections about the fullness and completeness of the overall sound and richness of the music. United with a last-hour "melodic" guitar in the title track, they even surprised me with the final effect, and now the music coverd many more frequencies, gaining variety and adding the tension I mentioned before regarding the two main classes of sounds, old school and mathematical.

Aside from the conceptual aspect that is discussed below extensively, the musical one is interesting as well. There are a lot of influences from the drone and doom genre, while the compositions are generally rather minimalist. Why did you pick such a 'reduced' approach? How would you in your own words describe Rostau's art?

Minimalism wasn't something I aimed to. As I said, the composition of the songs grew bit by bit, first through the aggregating process of basical elements, then by accumulating other single lines over the basis. In the late stages, I reached a point when music expressed everything I felt with the just the elements already merged. The overall minimalism simply is the result of this communicative goal.

Sometimes the richness of arrangements interfere with this focal aspect of music. Sometimes you listen to perfectly produced, neatly executed and fully arranged music, and feel very little emotions through it. That's a try to cover a lack of seed inspiration hoping to surprise or hypnotize the listener through baroque constructions, or throwing in well-established stylistic elements. Obviously I don't think that's always the case when encountering richly arranged music, and neither I'm an extremist fan of minimalism. I'm a fan of music which conveys feelings, emotions, suggestions..



That's how Rostau was born, and the goal I had in mind. At first, simple personal expression, then the same thing slightly bent to fulfill the general feel the basic elements made blink in me. Don't let me be misunderstood, I'm far from thinking the result is perfect. If it was, everything in it would be "poetry", as in Croce's aesthethic theories (which refere to literature, but could fit well also to music). Instead, there's still a lot of "structure". That's just my attempt, I hope the balance between the two favours the first.

The title track is somehow interesting. The longer it progresses the fewer elements and facets appear until at the end everything closes with some form of silence. At last, one might say, the soul is able to leave this world and drift off into a different place. Did you always wanted to create such an experience? Was this an idea that you had in the back of your head right from the start?

Absolutely not. The title track took it's final form very late, but very quickly. One could say that the experience created itself through me.

It's not a process I can describe in an intellective manner. After the recording of the keyboards, listening and filing the sound, the idea of a deep meaning inside it blinked in my mind. That's the way of inspiration, I think. As inconscius as it was, it had some force. And as forces, as the old gods of the myth, it is a seed manifesting itself in many ways, all related. As for the general concept of the album, it has no univocal itepretation. It can be seen as many things, and none of them would be wrong. It has hints and suggestions, and one could see the journey of the sould from flesh to the parting moment,

while another could visualize the gloom behind a column in an ancient desert temple, as shamans are calmly performing a ritual. Both ways are right, they are different and still could be related, they could be the expression of the same seed. What I wrote in the website is just one, the strongest of my views of it.

That interpretation came after music, according to the nature of this work. The energy of non-rational expressed by music is shaped and ordered by the a subsequent moment, both by feeling and mind. That's why any way to feel the album is right, the collapsing equilibrium of the album is the form gave by me in 2008 facing something that, having evolved for long time, was somehow external. In particular, the song was initially composed of the first two sequences. As you noticed, it proceeds evolving towards something calm, opaque, silent. The central part, that I found dramatic or even tragic, sparked the view of death occurring, while the rest of the song had a feel of melancholy and loneliness, feelings appropriate to the dying. The first part felt hypnotic and touching, holding a desire of meaning, a slight, sublimine question about where..what.. why. I decided to meld in the last part: like you say, a different place. That satisfied many needs, from the variety of the musical aspect, passing through the adding of a worrying hope after the melancholy of the preceeding of the music, to the fulfilling of the numerological symbol in it's duration.

According to my exploration of the astral travel experience, I have found that it can occur in, as to say, two directions, like the axis of the cartesian plane. The horizontal axis, in this view, is the journey through our physycal dimension, while the vertical one is about moving to other planes. The last part of the song could represent the lingering of the soul just beyond death, contemplating quietly it's mortal shell and still remembering with a sweet smile what the carnal experience was, now distant and forgiven. Just a few moments, before pointing to the stars and journeying through the void , free to explore and feel joy, or being attracted by some force, by fate, by cosmic laws... who knows? Anyway in this section of the album the soul it's still in the "horizontal" direction of travel.

Sadness seems to be a core aspect of the album, at least this was an impression that I gained while listening to it. It seems natural to find such, because topics like "loss and death" are often dealt in such a way in the Western civilization. Is there no hope to break out of it? Has our culture some sort of pathological fixation on death and tries to celebrate this depressing mood in a countless varieties? I think that fear of death, horror before self disgregation and the end, are basical anthropological feelings innate in a being able to reflect on itself and the bewildering loss of it's kin. It seems to me that these feelings are rooted in every culture. The liberation from these thoughts comes through many means, both spiritual and intellectual.

We should also distinguish between levels in culture and civilization. We could say that Western civilization has it's roots in Mesopotamic and Egyptian cultures. The epic of Gilgamesh conveys a strong, desperate feeling of sadness about the mortality of men, while in Egypt we found many hopes pointing to an afterlife, even happiness in it. Greeks too had precise views about life beyond death, expressed in their mythic cycles, but their culture also produced Epicureism, and it's calm disillusion about anything beyond the disgregation of body and soul in their corresponding heavy and thin atoms, which swirl again to form new entities. This brief schetch could go on a lot (and I don't think I'm able to draw a comprehensive or deep summary) : the point is that those ideas never reached a vast amount of people. Even talking about a single capital cultural event for the western world, as Christianity, we range from the frightened chanting peasant to the elaborations of st Augustine of Hippo, just to focus the late ancient period. On the other side, vikings hailed glorious death and embraced it with joy; romans gladly sacrificed themselves for the wellness of the Res Publica, stoicists proudly suicided when there was no way to live reasonably. But these are all generic views, strict summaries, not accounting the intimate feelings of billions of human beings through history. So we could state that how death is regarded in a sample population depends on the type and penetration strenght of a given culture, and on this culture's view about the topic. Where that culture can't reach to, the original sense of fright and loss prevails.

That said, I agree when you state that, generically speaking, modern western culture is fixated in these motives and expresses them almost univocally through sorrow, fear and so on. I know Eastern culture just superficially, and cannot say what are the feelings about death of the majority of people born in that context. Through ages, man has tried to ease discomfort, and the generic western civilization started, from a moment on, to focus almost solely on technology to ease the pain. "You're doing it wrong", would some demotivational say. In the XVIII century, the cult of reason cleared the fog of superstition, leaving a barren landscape to be seen. The devaluation of anything that couldn't be measured and numbered, anything that wasn't explainable through the strict use of the intellect, struck a severe blow to the connection with the divine, already weakening after the Medieval Age. An Italian poet, Leopardi, evolved through pessimism, from personal, to historical-anthropological, to cosmic. The solution was ataraxy, something way easier to search than to acquire. Even considering Romanticism, neo-idealism and so on, it seems that materialism and pragmatism are still among the dominant concepts that lead western culture in the modern age. And getting back to the question of the levels in culture and civilization, talking about contemporary western mass culture would be simply afflicting. No surprise if nowadays, generically speaking, death (personal death, not other's.. that would require extremely long and complex disquisitions) is expressed through sorrow. But there's plenty of hope to find both inside and outside anyone - and according to some belief systems, both directions are just the same.

Coming to Rostau, it's true that one could feel sadness leaking out across the listening. I pointed out many times that the core inspiration came out by itself, the basis of the music wasn't planned rationally to be so. Then I emphasized or changed what I felt had to, according to the theme the core sounds inspired me. For example, Celestial Hive Mind indeed communicates cold sadness and deep melancholy. It has nothing to do with death though, in fact it involves the opposite : an intellect existing only to consume and absorb, until nothing in the universe will be apart from it. The act of eating never fulfilled by satisfaction. And then, after everything is Tyrannid and nothing else lives, what? terrible solitude, deep void of meaning, only the well-known growing hunger. I wouldn't label "Ahriman.." as sad, I would prefer "tragic", in the ancient Greek tragedy conception. The tragedy of an unspeakable act of treason and genocide as a proud, cynic and feverish solution to a taint considered worst, an act - in the mind of Ahriman - embraced as impossible to avoid. I spoke in another question about "To die.." and it's compromise between sweet tears and shivering hopes, and then there's 3.33.333, which I still find somehow enigmatic. Could be hope, but there's some subterranean feeling of uneasiness and worry, prevailing and exploding with the last sound.

Is 3 33 333 some sort of a final electronic requiem for a dying race? The last sound that will leave the world and enter the vastness of space, maybe recorded at some point in the future by a distant alien race. Could this be final music of this planet?

As I found during my studies, smart or innocent critique always find meanings and nuances that even the author would have never imagined. As long as there is something effectively detectable that gives a basis to the argumentation, the interpretation cannot be told wrong. That's even more true in a work like this. We're not talking about a didascalic poem, we're talking about allusive music.

That said, I hope the final music of this race will be a joyful laugh, even if the idea of the electronic requiem tickles the Imp of Perverse in me, as Poe figured it.

I had absolutely no intent of sort when I produced 3.33.333. It was pure experimentation, it didn't even was meant to be a song. But when placed in the context, after the final work of concept-structuring, it generates a host of different images, sensations, "trips". My personal view, the reason why I put it in that place, in that form, ending the album after "to die..", is one of hope and exploration, which could occur after the separation of the spirit from matter. I said "could": the mentioned underlying feeling of worry expresses the uncertainty both of the hypothetical soul journeying through time-space and of the listener reflecting on what could be after death. The final sound leaves a shiver full of questions, and then there's plenty of silence to start answering.



What kind of instruments and equipment were used for the recording?

I hinted before that the equipment at disposal was mostly entry-level. I had a cheap guitar plugged in a cheap amplifier, with no pedals. The microphone too was inexpensive, I bought it in a tech store. Recordings were made directly into my pc.. Nowadays I use a Terratech phase 88 sound card, but at that time I think it was a simple soundblaster live. Recordings as well as post processing were accomplished through the Audition 1.5 program united with some plugins. Keyboards were also taken directly through pc, using a digital sampler, Kontakt, played on the pc keyboard using sounds taken from 3.33.333. For the drums I used the same sampler, sounds from the Drumkit From Hell and midi. I didn't mention it before : I think it's clearly hearable, drums are digital and not actually human-performed. I studied drums for a couple of years, and never liked drum machines or trigger sounds. The drum lines which are now on the album were meant to be temporary, but recordings proved too arduous given the situation. I tried to work out it's sounds to be as warm as I could, and the result is satisfying enough.

The sound resulting on the album was therefore somehow compelled by the situation. I'll note, however, that I prefer old school, warm-feeling equipment to top quality. I prefer 80's and 90's sound also in the music I listen to, finding the ultra perfect sound you hear nowadays in any production too sterile and cold, too perfect. That's one reason why on the last Ep of my other project, DISTRUZIONE di Massa, I used an old walkman cassette recorder to take vocals, even if I could have used a minidisk or the microphone directly plugged in the pc through a mixer. Also, I absolutely prefer human errors and musician's intention to digitally obtained mathematical precision.

Even with better equipment the sound on the album would have been different, but with similar characteristics.

How many rehearsal sessions took place for it; if you can still count them?

In the strict sense of the expression, implying people playing together in a rehearsal room, none.

You wrote to me that the music of Rostau cannot be enjoyed "straight out of the box". Why is this so? We live in hasty times and time is money, so people might not want to explore such a complex topic like you present it on your release.

I'll quote an email I sent some time ago on this very topic :

"I know the album is quite cryptic and cannot be fully enjoyed "straight out of the box". This was indeed meant to be. The album took many years to develop and gain its final form. It's the fruit of many layers of passion overlapping each other, the fruit of time, experience, growth, change. I don't care about fame, so no full names, photos or detailed information were included. The music isn't probably pleasing to untrained or unprepared ears, to superficial listenings, but - and this is the central point of the question - it can gift so much if properly explored. It contains a tension in itself, a tension to explore, to find out more, to perceive the next nuance in the keyboards or just another suggestion from the atmosphere. It calls the intrigued listener to go further in the music. Still, I'm not so presumptuous to think that everyone will have the interest in doing it. And I have never been a self-advertising guy, so no links, no long texts about ideas, concepts, and music inside the album.[...]. So, to make a long story short, I left to the initiative of anyone who hears the call to explore coming from the album to find a rich prize. That's what sincere albums pull to do, and if anyone finds "to die.." to be so, even a very few people around the world, I'll feel pleased enough."

And what you say about time is so painfully true, nowadays. It's getting worse year after year, noticeably. The "system" is any day more complex, and if you slow the pace a little, one hundred other sharks will outswim you. And then you freeze in the depth. And that's not the only facet of the problem : the musical world is getting simply too crowded. Anyone can make music through simple means, like I did. But too much variety ends up in confusion. I found out recently, trying to spread the last Ep of DISTRUZIONE di Massa, that standard reviews, found on generic metal websites, are nowadays short and superficial, compared to what they were in 2004/2005. One very good italian webzine I knew, Shapeless Zine, partly shutted down recently : they used to review demos and underground albums, as well as bigger names, but they had to stop receiving any material at all, as the effort of reviewing deeply and through real and metabolised listening had gotten simply impossible. It's hard even to the fanatic to disentangle from the overwhelming mass of potentially good music constantly coming out, without sacrificing the real listening experience, which should be feeling the music instead of grinding an album after another of slightly different tunes. Internet offers samples, that's true.. but considering the amount mentioned before, one risks to end up collecting a huge library of isolated songs. I know

many people who have their hard disks full of albums: many of them never get a chance to be listened at all, and other stand still after one 3-song-spin or two. On the other hand, many people can enjoy music that way. I am one who tends to fossilize on the same album for a long time. I remember listening to Farmakon everyday for about two years, and that album frequently comes out of the speaker today, too. That's simply a way to experience music, I have many friends who can listen deeply retaining a lot of variety.

The chances someone will end up enjoying "To die.." at such depth is slim, I perfectly know it. But as said, I prefer a bunch of people who feel that it's music is communicating with them and feel the pull to understand more, than selling every copy of the album to people who will leave it to dust after one absent-minded try. Exactly as I would do in person, as that album is the expression of human beings.

To Die and to the Stars Ascend, this is the title of the release, but why do you think that in the vastness of space lies the salvation? Hell, Gehennah, Hades and the like are different examples and point in a different 'direction'.

Just as you say, it's a direction. I scattered delucidations on my view of existence in various answers to your acute questions, so I'll try not to repeat myself. Space is vast, and the manifestations of existence are incredibly vaster. Or so it seems. Infernal world has been conceived in a great number of beliefs, from an archaic realm physically lying under the surface of earth to one fold of the universe where rejected buds of creation end up. On another axis of analysis, some say that our physical world is hell, because it's dominated by disgregation, one low state compared to higher forms of existence.

So what is salvation, and how to accomplish it? the concept of salvation itself is hooked to human categories, such as absence of pain (another human category), as many wouldn't call "salvation" the simple fact of continuing to exist, if this existence is in "hell". And still, salvation could in fact be that, and an hypothetical life in hell just a stopping place with its own categories of perception. We could also evaluate the concept of evolution, binding the term "salvation" to a virtual ascension through its stages, while "damnation" could be involution, or perhaps the inability to further evolve. We could also refer to quantum vibrations in one's soul, or one's true self.

I think that there may be forces and actions in our physical universe that can leave a mark in the transcendental origin of a specific person, changing its "colour", or "vibration", and influencing the way existence is perceived and the peculiar state it's lived in. The final goal could be completeness, and completeness could mean the identification of oneself into the principle of existence. Or it could be constant evolution, constant change, the way the one self of the universe experiences and knows itself through the mutable and the fragmented. Or our very human existence could even be the manifestation of a lesser order of forces (like, in example, solar system ones), a sector of the creation lower in hierarchy respect to the only one principle - but still comprehended in that principle.

In a complex and uncertain panorama like this, anyone is called to choose and form his view, and act accordingly; and even believing in nothing is still believing in something.

When you read books of Thoreau for instance, then you recognize the wide array of his knowledge in terms of old literature and mythology. Such seems to have been lost today. Do you think that this is a bad thing and are you familiar with your own cultural literal heritage?

Myths are tales containing great power. There are many ways to interpret them, and they were an incredibly ancient vehicle of knowledge, a way to understand the nature and the universe. As such, they were symbols epitomizing the comprehension of stars and life cycles. Also, myths' story is very long, starting from the very ancient tales about the cosmos and the symbolic transmission of ethnopolitical facts. Facts such as the second millennium a.c invasions in the Greek area, symbolized by the destruction of beasts (which on their turn embodied the cosmic and religious conceptions of some human stocks) by gods, embodiments of the new systems and dominant elites taking over the former ones.

But then the myth was also philosophical speculation, literature and more. It is possible to give a punctual alchemic interpretation of Greek and Egyptian myths (and many more, considering that resemblances and underlying themes associate numerous traditions); myths feed western literature for a great number of centuries, and sparked wide-range speculations over human knowledge, from psychology to physics. Notice that scientific western terms derive from the ancient Greek and Latin language; language both expresses and shapes cultures, and those cultures relied deeply on myths. It's certainly bad that nowadays knowing myths is considered needless, even just for their pull to reflection and reality interpretation, if not considering the factual knowledge they carry. On the other hand, today's world is frenetic, and that which doesn't offer an immediate and tangible benefit is low-valued.

I myself can't surely say to possess but lightly the mythological heritage of my culture, even if I deal with it now and then, as I study letters and philosophy at the university and being interested in topics related to mythology.

Right these days I'm studying some episodes of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and it's fascinating to see how the implied power in myths finds new forms and blends into new realities with the passing of centuries, mirror and vehicle of the time in which they keep letting their charge flow. Even considering the sheer influence on literature from the ancient world to the modern one, and considering that literature and culture walk together, we cannot think possible to understand our world completely ignoring the nature and content of myths.



A core aspect of your music as well as the concept behind Rostau seems to be the transition from the living to the dead, from the physical basis to the transcendental one. Well, as even Plato wrote about it several thousand years ago, it seems to an aspect that mankind or the philosophers have thought about extensively. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to know why it is so important to you.

I'm deeply convinced that the physical world isn't the only one this universe is made of, and so I am that the material existence we call life isn't the only state a person can experience. Time and space are categories that appear stable, but just the experience of dreaming can easily lead to think differently. I believe that material death isn't an end, but a passage. We are part of an "everything", a manifestation of a unique source in a plane of

existence, and as such, we are like an atom of a body of inconceivable complexity. I know this isn't fresh news. The central node of the question is whether a creature gifted with conscience can retain it through the stages of mutation, or not. Obviously there are hints all around us pointing towards both answers, and that's why so many people through history struggled in search of an answer. Personally, I think the universe (or better, omniverse) is far more complex than we can imagine, and something that people philosophically reasoning tend to ignore is that between the supreme origin of anything that exists and our material experience could lie a host of different kinds of existence. Before the "light of God" we could see us under the laws of the solar system and its powers, seeing us as shards of the essence of Tiamat knowing itself through our fragmented lives, or we could hypothesize that after death one wakes up in another kind of existence, either assuming a cyclic return to the material plane or a linear course through states, evolving. Ovid's *Metamorphosis* is a vast poetical celebration of transition, each mutation is both a death and the birth of a new existence, expressed through myth and history. An essence changing form and still being the same principle, with a different material manifestation and with changed attributes in its transcendental form.

I'm far from having answers, and I keep adjusting or changing my view as my experience grows. So many different traditions and systems could also be different expressions of the same complex truth, and this reminds me of the concept that the various religions are just the expression of the same mystic principle, the *philosophia perennis*. And still, this is all so limited, so human. Thomas Aquinas, after all his life of deep theological work, stated "*mihi videtur ut pula*": everything I wrote seems to me like straw.

Recently I've been evaluating the theories according to which a person is one of the physical manifestations of a "true self" which exists beyond the physical dimension, whose pull is to evolve through various incarnations. And still metempsychosis could be a partial view, not taking in account the possible existence of many layers between "physical" and "transcendental". The concept of time we are wrapped into limits our ability to think, in this case. And we should also consider that "thinking" isn't but one way of acquiring concepts, and surely a limited one. Anyway, to go back to your question, I see the problem of life beyond death as fundamental, something not to be skipped, and I live my life accordingly, trying to never forget it's implications and trying to view things from it's peculiar wide angle.

Two other topics are the Warhammer 40K universe and Ahriman. Could you elaborate why these have sparked your interest and the reasons for picking them?

Since I was very young, I was fascinated by the universe of Warhammer 40k, it was so crude, real, poetic and tragic. I was charmed by the vastness of the context, our entire galaxy and even other ones, I was thrilled by the struggle of mankind and the display of technology whose real use was forgotten since millennia, and were created and maintained by prayers and rituals whose intimate meaning was recognized no more. I found out later that many stories which form up that universe had allegoric meaning or hidden referrals to our world's cultures. Just in example, the divinized maintaining rituals remind me of the *Carmen Saliare*, chanted by *Salii* priests during a May procession every year, and which were not intelligible by historic age Romans who heard them..

Many years ago I was an enthusiastic player of the tabletop game when I had the occasion, but mostly read the manuals thirsty for their stories and the worlds evoked. In the first time of Rostau, I was browsing a forum related to the game, and found a topic about songs having Warhammer 40k as inspiration. I caressed the idea of making my own ones and posting them, and that desire inspired the lyrics of Celestial Hive Mind. I never had the occasion to effectively post any news about the song when the album was published many years after, but in the meantime came Ahriman of the Thousand Sons. He's story is one of my favourites, I'm enchanted by the context of his Legion devoted to knowledge and study, which lead them on the forbidden path of knowledge. When they divined that the Horus Heresy was about to break out, they tried to inform the Emperor about the treason, but he didn't listen, as they trespassed their Pillars of Hercules. From their point of view, the Emperor betrayed them, while he unleashed the savage Space Wolves to destroy their libraries, legion and planet. Joining Horus and the powers of Chaos seemed the only option, and when the war was lost, they retired in the Eye of Terror. Living so exposed to the forces of unstableness lead them to mutation, and so Ahriman took his decision : another betrayal, towards his own brothers. His Rubric spell destroyed every Thousand Son lacking psychical powers, reducing their bodies to ashes, nullifying their minds and sealing their spirits in their armours. Psykers like him and the excellence of the Legion were cleansed from the taint of chaos, and had their powers enhanced. Magnus, their primarch, banished him from their planet in the Eye of Terror, and Ahriman wanders the galaxy since then, plotting and pursuing his schemes.

That's touching and deep, and when I had a first basis for the song, I used the story's suggestions to build it around the climax of the Ahriman spell.



The macro-concept in the album came later, through various stages of elaboration, and I decided to keep these themes to create a unique thematic balance involving ideas and suggestions from different spheres of thought. Anyone can interpret this as he finds appropriate, my personal view is quite complex, sprinkled from my own exploration on the world of dreams and lucid dreams. Dreams are neither stable nor physical. However they have their relative dimensions of time and space. "Somewhere", they are. Experiences in dreams affect the one living them, they're just a different kind of information and effect respect to the experience in physical world. Veracious dreams leave a memory. The most realistic ones involve many human senses, and I remember clearly the air caressing my body from the various times I flew through it. These memories aren't very different from memories collected through physical experience of the world. I just know that they happened in a different plane than the physical one.

This led me to think about the worlds of invention as instable forms existing or having existed in some fold of the complex universe of ours (as any thought, in its peculiar way of being). Who knows, in another state of existence, a soul could end up travelling through one such world. That's just a suggestion, I don't take this as a stable point in my conception of reality. I have no truths in hand, and have evolved my view many times. However, when reaching a high control of lucid dreaming, theoretically it could be possible to create, in example, a shard of the universe of warhammer 40k and act in it. Technically the context would be created by you (you don't end up in a context thought by another person), but the lucid and rational point of the iceberg would journey in a setting generated by the unconscious, and therefore unpredictable. And nonetheless, such a dream would be part of the experiences of the dreamer, shaping his reality and essence, and "existing", as the universe is a vast light filtered through the prism of anyone's self, anyone being the principle of his own peculiar reality. We could imagine that the reality of the soul in 3.33.333 includes a 40k experience, and that the first two songs are expressions of some facets of that experience.

On the former issue: do you play it as table deck and/or in the computer version? I have merely played the computer versions so far, but I have to admit that this had been a lot of fun. It seems like a very cruel and brutal universe; a place with little mercy.

I started playing the tabletop version after having been interested for long time in the background of the warhammer 40k universe, and after starting painting miniatures. With the passing of years various pc games came out related to that world; the first one I put my hand on was Space Hulk : an atypical first person shooter with a strong tactical component set in a specific setting carved out of the whole : the exploration of giant space wrecks, known as Hulks, by Blood Angels' Terminators. The potential discovery of ancient forgotten technology lead to the discovery of the genestealer and chaotic infestation in the Hulks. It was very claustrophobic, set in labyrinths of narrow corridors where the bulky terminator armours of the space marines had troubles maneuvering, while an unlimited number of the insect like genestealers rushed to you and your squad from everywhere. I remember I was thrilled and charmed by the atmosphere of the game, tense and desperate. You could hear the other squadmates screaming and swearing vengeance in the radio, and at those times (something like 1995) that was something incredible. Nowadays the boardgame version of Space Hulk is the only thing I still play, along with Battlefleet Gothic (a tabletop battle of starships, intricate and stunningly refined. And the miniatures are awesome).

Then, on pc, I played intensely to Chaos Game. The most buggy pc game ever, it was far more similar to the tabletop version. It too had a great atmosphere, very pleasing for the scenarios, the tactical system and... well, the possibility to command a loyal transposition of space marines in a long and structured campaign! I would play it still today, if I had time and could manage to get it working.

Then came Dawn of War. This last game, while spectacular and amusing, reflects the more cinematographic nature of the games evolution through the years.

The old material was more mature and "shaded" and soffused, far richer in starting points to raise the thoughts view to our-world tematics. The emotions it provoked were deeper and less black-and-white. The whole had a less pompous and superficial taste, it wasn't child-oriented, and from that period come the most intriguing core ideas of the system. Necrons are perhaps the better product of the recent period with their Gods, the C'tan, cosmic entities that once feeded on stars. Then, called by a dying race and seduced into living metal bodies, they discovered the pleasures of flesh and started to have a taste for living essences as food. Deceived by one of them, and an Eldar God, the Great Arlequin, they found that the most delicious essence in the universe was that of another C'Tan. They destroyed themselves in a fratricidal genocide, till only four of them remained, powerful and very different in nature.

Anyway, what you say is true : It's a brutal and merciless universe, where the life of the individual has no value, and where the survival of the race (almost every race : to tell the truth, some of them like the Tyranids don't care about it at all) justifies any means. A very delicate balance of constant war in a depersonalizing galaxy-wide horizon.

Just in example, there's the Golden Throne : a gargantuan machinery devoted to the survival of the mortal shell of the Immortal Emperor God of Mankind, that once walked among "us". Wounded to the threshold of death by his genetically generated son Horus (in a rebellion that echoes the one of the biblical Lucifer), he has been sustained for 10 000 years, so that his spirit can be anchored to the material plane. The Golden Throne is nourished by the constant sacrifice of human psykers, whose soul is consumed so that the spirit of the Emperor can keep assisting and guiding mankind. The psyker themselves, on the other hand, are gathered across the galaxy by the Black Ships of Inquisition, since they threaten the human race with their genetic deviance, their uncontrolled powers and their being potential portals for the demons of the warp. The strongest and most talented ones are trained to serve mankind, the majority is immolated for the same cause.

Aside from the concept and also the tracks appear in a rather surprising style:

The first 3 songs were produced to be precisely 11.01.111, while the last was 3.33.333. (Total playing time : 36.36.666) [quote from the homepage]

I guess this might leave people a little bit bewildered. Why this extreme precision and what is the meaning behind this numerical code?

At first the idea came by chance, as for the rest of the album. The first two songs ended up being 11.01.xxx minutes long, and having already elaborated part of the life, death and resurrection ideas



behind the concept, I decided to add a further piece of the puzzle. Always fascinated by numerology, I picked the occasion to extend the suggestions of the album : in the duality between 1 and 0, one represent fullness, the essence, while zero the void, the absence. In a context like that of the album, which could suggest a vision of the universe as a manifestation of perfect fullness discovering itself in the fragmentation, the flawed series of ones (11.01.111) can symbolize the conscient being in it's experiential dimension : removing the flaw, that is the absence, only the essence remains, perfection. 3 is traditionally related to the divine and

perfection, and by summing the 1s of the three manifestations of man (body, mind and soul) we get three times 3, with a 3 graphically added in any repetition (3.33.333).

The implications on the musical plane are that the first three songs represent a material and corporeal experience, so comprising the flaw, and at the end of "To Die.." you enter in the dimension of the transcendental beyond, in 3.33.333.

The artwork of the CD contains also several interesting symbols. You have a version of the 'Eye of Providence', several Egyptian hieroglyphs and some sort of a constellation. Some hints can be found on your homepage, but I would like to discuss this a bit:

Who is Senenmuth? Why did you pick him and did he play an important role in the ancient Egypt? How does Orion fit into this?

Senenmuth was a high dignitary, astronomer and architect during the 16th or 18th dynasty in Ancient Egypt. He gained great power and influence, then he fell in disgrace. On the ceiling of his second tomb, the secret TT353, there's the first complete star map in history, a lot of time before the one by Sethi I. This star map is obviously imbued of mythologic symbology, and one of it's halves shows various figures, gods and men, sailing on small boats across the void. One of the most striking elements is the presence of three drop-like signs around the central star in the Orion's Belt. According to what we know about that time's technology, it was impossible that they were seen, but we now know (since the 70s, if i recall correctly) that there are effectively three planets around that star. The drop-like signs could represent as many planetary orbits. This all suggests fascinating implications, if verified.

Morte information can be found in this link

http://www.maat-ka-ra.de/english/personen/senenmut/sen_t353.htm, or searching TT353 (the code of the tomb).

Who is Roger Essig? Can write a bit about your reasons for picking his 'God 1' work?

I found God_1, the painting by Roger Essig, browsing the art vault of www.erowid.org. I didn't know him before and know little about him still nowadays, but I found that work very fascinating and contacted him to ask permission to use it for the album. I choose it because it depicts very well the concept of a weaved material world, a complex warping channel emanating from a single source. It's hypnotic nature and the graceful intersection of lines, united with the balance of colours, made me think it was perfect to convey the ideas of transcendental, branched and interconnected, and journey.

From that basis I made the artwork grow to encompass other themes, such as tyrannids, chaos and those suggestions from Senemuth's Tomb I spoke earlier of. The whole, as it should now be clear, doesn't want to convey a focused ideology or belief system, but rather an accumulation of possibilities and interrupted paths, *Holzwege*, using an Heidegger's term.

Why 'remove the flaw'?

See the earlier question about the timing of the songs.

How have the responses been so far? Have you been able to reach out to a certain amount of folks?

No. I tried to spread the album a bit, but I'm much more prone to create something than to make it known to others. I found that I isolated too much, I lost the contacts I had in the musical scene before, and anyway had none in the doom scene. I sent the album to some labels for trades and distribution, and had a review published on doom-metal.com. After that review and the entry in metal-archives.com, some people contacted me personally to have the cd, and many more downloaded the album from our official website www.rostaudoom.com.

Almost every response I had so far was very positive : I'm proud to say that "To die.." is certainly an atypical album, one which can raise interest. Surely It's not an easy-listening work, and also considering it's many flaws, I simply don't expect many people to really like it. The ones who did so far, however, found it captivating and personal. Some said "*it is an album that takes time to grow*" and that it "*is unique. but you have to be in the right mood to enjoy it*". All of these aspects are true, and I find this a compliment to the work, a confirmation of it's non-banality. Rather than selling all the copies, I was hoping to spring emotions and thoughts, and the sincere compliments I received from some people already fulfilled this desire.

Someone suggested me to contact promotion agencies, but not only I don't know any, also I'm not sure I'm willing to give away the management of the album and pay for that.. as a symbol of a part of my life, I think I prefer the personal and private contact with those who found it interesting, or spreading it in the underground, the place flourishing with passion we know.

I want to add something interesting I found out right in the very last days : Rostau's songs can be found as videos on some site. I discovered this while googling. None ask me a thing, but that's not a problem itself.. I still don't like this contemporary tendency. Not only I'm an old school listener who still plays some vinyls now and then, but most importantly this album is crated to be listened from start to end. It should be a voyage, create an atmosphere, and the carved single songs loose much of their charm. Also, the information readable about the band is sometimes wrong or misleading. Anyway, it's still a sign of appreciation, and under that point of view I'm glad of it.

Is there a chance that you start another experimental group? Or do you want to concentrate on something more metal oriented and less 'fancy'?

For some years I concentrated on my other project, Distruzione di Massa. As said, it is surely more metal oriented. It also retains some "fancyness", the last EP opens with a song about knowledge whose lyrics are taken directly from the chant XXVIÂ° from Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, and it ends with Lucido, a "didascalical" song about Lucid Dreaming containing some dream recordings I took during my studies on that topic, narrating and describing sensations and emotions.

Although i'm still playing and recording something, my life as gotten rather busy and took different paths, so I'm not planning anything certain on the experimental side, nowadays. Although, I would really like to try again the experience. The last project I was working on was Zerfall, playing an old school Death-Doom with slightly experimental keyboards, and based on a concept about two galaxies collapsing one into another, and the futile struggle of the seemingly powerful civilizations in them.

What kind of music do you listen to generally? Could you name some albums that you have enjoyed very recently?

I listen to some funeral doom, and a lot of old school death metal. Tides of Awakening and Black Vistae by Tyranny, the last album by Esoteric, Worship, the whole Skepticism discography, Mournful Congregation, Ras Algethi, and some more, united with albums from death metal bands I traded with distros thanks to the last DDM ep, like Pathogen, or big names and albums like Exstintion by Lemming Project, Phobos by Voivod (I'm crazy for this one!), Grave, Entombed, Obituary, Pestilence and so on. I listen also to some stoner and stoom, mostly early Black Sabbath, Sleep, Amerijuanican by Bongzilla.. And I wouldn't know where to place them, but recently I put on Given to the Rising from Neurosis, too.

Anyway the genre I play the most is ambient. I extensively listen to Lustmord (mostly The place where the stars hang and Arecibo), Neptune Towers (both Caravans to Empire Agol and Transmission from Empire Agol). Also I listen a lot to Jon Hassel, a trumpet player creating something I would call jazz-based ambient, although probably experts on that branch of music wouldn't label it so. It's an incredibly fascinating music, the album I'm spinning these days is Last Night the Moon Came Dropping Its Clothes in the Street (2009). To keep it on the non-metal side, I'm not ashamed to say that I listen a lot to the old albums by Elisa, an italian singer-songwriter. She played pop in the rock and trip-hop forms, and her voice and lyrics, expecially in some old or not very known songs (like A Beautiful Night, Yashal, The waves, Gift, Rainbow, Creature, Dancing and many more) simply touch me inside to tears.

Where can people acquire a copy of your release?

Directly from me, through the "have the cd" page on our website, www.rostaudoom.com ,at the price of 3 euros

How can people contact you?

By an email located on the same website, info@rostaudoom.com

Some final words if you like and still have enough motivation to write something.

There would be much more I'd like to say about many questions you asked me, but the nature of topics involved implicates that new thoughts spring every time I reflect on them, and this interview would never end. I know I'm far away from having been exhaustive, but I hope I could communicate sufficiently.

I thank you for this opportunity and anyone who will be touched by Rostau's works, one way or another.

Giulio from Rostau



Old Ironsides

AY, tear her tattered ensign down
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar;--
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the
flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee;--
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

Oh better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

By Oliver Wendell Holmes



Interview & Review section

Sylvan Realm

Hello again ... this is the second interview with you. How are you? Quite a lot of things have changed since we talked the last time about your band.

I am doing very well for I just got back from a trip to one of the most desolate, isolated, and forgotten areas of the west Texas desert. I got some much needed escape from the city, as well gathered many ideas for the next Sylvan Realm album that I have already started to write...Yes indeed a lot has changed since the last interview

Not many will know Sylvan Realm, so why don't you lay out the history of the band? Where did it start and how do you reach the point where you are today?

Sylvan Realm formed from the ashes of my previous band Reverie. I had a different musical vision and approach with Reverie more of a raw depressive black/death metal sound I was going for back then. I had been writing riffs for the Isolation album since I was 18 years old and had lived in a lot of different places while I wrote the songs and lyrics for that album. Reverie was my 1st proper band and the isolation album was the 1st time I had entered a professional recording studio to record an album. Before that it was messing around with tape recorders in basements as a young teenager and playing Vlad Tepes style raw black metal with a ugly production. Reverie was a collection of my work from age 18 to 23. Since I am a drifter and move around a lot I never had another musician to write or rehearse with so I ended up getting in contact with Nightsky studio since the owner and engineer Ron Vento was experienced with black and death metal, he helped me find a session drummer for the Isolation album.

After the Isolation album was made I was living alone out in the rocky mountains of Montana were solitude and isolation surrounded me. I was living deep in my own headspace obsessed with philosophy, spirituality, and of course music. After a lot of time analyzing my prior work in Reverie I decided I needed a name that wasn't so ambiguous not to mention there are a ton of other bands named Reverie doing all different types of music. I wanted something a bit more original, unique, and personal. During the time of changing the bands name I felt what would help the music would be to bring in some other band members and let them add their own musical elements. I was originally going to have Algol from the band Forgotten Tomb do the drums however he ended up having surgery on his knees and couldn't do the drums. I contacted Evan Madden a few weeks later and he responded right away with interest in performing the drums on the album. As for Bass I did the bass more or less on the spot on my 1st album in the studio with no rehearsal. This time around I wanted the bass lines to really stand out from the guitars and add another dimension to the music. So Ron from Nightsky studio helped me out once again by finding me a truly great bassist, Jason Eckert.

How does the band name fit into this and why did you change your pseudonym from Unknown to Sylvan?

Sylvan Realm fits the music on a few different levels that I will explain... Nature and the realm of the forrest deeply inspires the music I write. I would often times go out deep into the wilderness and mountains for inspiration and ideas for my music. I started linking this "realm" I would enter in the wilderness with the head space I was living in and got to the point were I could drift out into the mountains through my thoughts. So I decided what better to represent the music I wrote then the very world I would delve into to gather the ideas and inspiration that transferred into the music itself. As far as changing from unknown to sylvan... that can be explained by once wanting a pseudonym and later deciding not to use one anymore... this is a bit of a trick answer... lets see who can unravel it!

Interestingly, both the logo for Reverie as well as for Sylvan Realm shows a similarity: Ouroboros. What does it mean to you that it appears in both of them?

The ouroboros is a symbol that has always been very personal to me, It represents the cycles of the universe and cycles of life that inspire my music. The beauty behind the symbol is that it can be used in different ways and has several different meanings, every angle I look at the ouroboros I see the genius behind the design unraveling and then repeating.

You also moved, didn't you? Has the music for your latest output been written before you took this step? Does this new surrounding have a different atmosphere then the place you left? Might this have an impact on your music as well?

This is a rather interesting question to me, Yes in fact I did move (again). I had written everything for the lodge of transcendence during my time in Montana. The vast majesty of the rocky mountains and the isolation out there is where the songs on this album came from. As well all the artwork are photos I took out in Montana. I relocated back to Maryland (where I am originally from) I have always used Maryland as a base to return to before I make my next move in life. Also the studio I record at is here in Maryland. The atmosphere in Maryland is the polar opposite of that in Montana. Its much more difficult for me to gain peace of mind here or go out into nature. However I can travel to the places that bring me inspiration and solitude through my mind, for I believe that the places I have traveled to become part of me for I have formed a bond with those magical places that I have found in nature. so in the end this move wont have a impact on the sound or style of sylvan realm for I can always revisit the places that bring me inspiration.

Have the basic aspects of your music remained the same? On your Reverie MySpace site you once wrote the following words: isolation, the vast cosmos, isolated landscapes, abandonment, misanthropy, metaphysics. Would these also be true in terms of your new band or have you shifted into other areas?



The elements you listed are still sources of inspiration for sylvan realm, The lodge of transcendence focuses a lot on unlocking cosmic gateways found in nature and finding enlightenment through the blinding light and endless darkness that make up the cosmos. You have to go beyond dualism and see darkness and light as positive and negative energy that make a whole in order to fully understand the meaning behind the lyrics.

The style of the band has changed quite significantly since the Reverie release. The acoustic passages are 'nearly gone' – more on this later – for instance and also the music sounds denser as well as focussed. Why did you switch to this new style? Why did you leave these old paths behind?

First off this wasn't a switch, but rather an evolution. I was still searching for my sound and style while I recorded the Reverie Isolation album and was still learning a lot about writing/recording music. After the 4 years that followed the release of the isolation album I found all the keys I needed in order to fully unlock the sound and style that I wanted to create. I would say the Reverie album was a major stepping stone to get

to what I created with Sylvan Realm. A major difference is I wanted a massive larger than life wall of guitar sound on this album so I wrote all the riffs as layers... sometimes there are 3 completely different guitar riffs going at once. I had also spent countless days and hours playing guitar during the years that followed the Isolation album and got to know my instruments much better during this time. I dedicated the majority of my life to making this album, I was totally obsessed living in the "lodge of transcendence world" for 4 years I suppose this is why the music sounded so focused not to mention I spent more then a year in the studio making sure everything came out exactly how I had envisioned it to sound. As for the acoustic parts... there are still a good amount of acoustic guitar on this album, they are just immeshed into the music more so then on the 1st album. The acoustic guitars are more layered this time around instead of one lone guitar playing by itself such as I did on the isolation album.

Do you still listen to nowadays' music or do you try to stick with something that has 'lain' a bit?

I listen to a ton of music from the 70's all the way up until more recent bands today. There are a lot less good bands coming out now days due to so much over saturation. However every year I find at least 12 or so new releases from that year that I love. I always seem to find good new bands it just takes a lot more digging through a ton of shit copy cat bedroom bands. The main problem in everyone wants a band and most people want to sound exactly like their favorite band and have no message or anything original to offer. And now with all the home recording technology you can slop together a cheep studio and rip off your favorite band and before you know it you have an album thats selling for the same price as your favorite professional bands album who did go to a real studio, spent years or decades mastering their instruments, took the time to create their own unique style, and isn't out to copy their favorite band. Sure there is a flip side to this, there are some "home studio" bands that are great and original, you don't have to record at a professional studio to make a good album. Its just that theres a major drop in quality lately due to all of this, and so many new bands don't have anything unique or original to offer.

In our previous interview you wrote: *The music of Reverie was designed purposely not to be placed into a specific category... rather to be a myriad of dark intense music.*

Do you plan your music or does this evolution come naturally? Where do you see the band progress towards? Do you have some sort of idea of a concept of music which you would like to create?

I try to mix every style of music I listen to into Sylvan Realm and in the end make a unique approach to dark metal out of it. I suppose one could call my band "progressive black metal" or "dark metal with black metal and doom metal influences" theres a lot of different ways to label Sylvan realm due to the traces of, dark metal, death, thrash, doom, classic heavy metal, Progressive metal, folk, the list goes on. However the term that I think fits best is "eclectic dark metal". So yes this time around I did decide to give my music a label... but at the end of the day id like the listener to give it their own label. So far most people have just been calling it black metal. The evolution of my music does come naturally, however I do have a lot of ideas for what to do in the future but if I share them now there will be no surprise in later years. There are many different musical avenues Id like to explore however for now all I can say is that the next Sylvan Realm album will be similar to the lodge of transcendence but with more acoustic guitar and more fingerpicking. I have always loved doom metal but lately I have been more so into doom metal then ever so that will also come out more in the next album.

How would you sum up your current style? What are its core essences?

As I mentioned above I would consider Sylvan Realm to be "eclectic dark metal" Sylvan Realm is deeply rooted in black, and doom metal, with traces of progressive rock, heavy metal, melodic death metal, thrash, and the list continues to go on. One thing I will say for people who have not yet heard Sylvan Realm's music is that there is very balanced blended flow to the music were you really have to know your styles to be able to hear all the influences. A lot of the time people mainly hear the black metal influence and just label it as that. However this is not just another black metal band, I will go as far as saying anyone who likes doom metal, classic heavy metal, trash, black metal, melodic death metal and even 70's hard rock will find something in Sylvan Realm that they can get into.

Even though The Lodge of Transcendence opens with a rather powerful opener, the music later transcends into something more complex and you like to take the tempo as well as the metal parts out again and again. Should music have a certain amount of complexity? Do you need this in order to express yourself or do you think you stick to something minimalist also?

I have had several people mention complexity when it comes to my song writing, however it was never the intention to purposely make the music complex. I like to write very untraditional songs with no filler so every song has an entire albums worth of ideas. As well I wanted each song to be more like a composition with different movements rather then just a long song with one tempo and one key. I would never write a song for the sake of complexity or for the sake of minimalism... thats the pit hole that so many death metal bands fall into and for the later dark ambient projects. I write each song to be a unfolding musical journey that takes the listener from the valley up onto a jagged mountain peak, back down the mountain, over into a canyon, and down into a deep glacier lake ... so to speak.

The acoustic Twilight Kingdom sounds like a peaceful ending. Something that would give the listener some time to breathe and rest the soul. It is also a stark contrast compared with the opener. Do you want to be at peace with the listener at the end? Maybe not over the whole release but it was especially here that some memories on the German Empyrium were awoken. Did you ever had a chance to listen to something of this band?

Empyrium is one of my favorite bands so weather the comparison was suppose to be a compliment or not... I take the comparison to be a big compliment! I have every Empyrium album and admire all their work, they are one of the best bands from Germany in my opinion. On the same label as Empyrium is Tenhi from Finland who are also a influence to my acoustic playing. However my biggest influence on the acoustic guitar is my Father for he always played acoustic guitar around me as a young boy and thats how I originally got interested in writing music. Twilight Kingdom wasn't intentionally placed at the end to be peaceful or relaxing, rather at the end of the album was just how the song seemed to fit the best as more of a long outré. Twilight Kingdom was written from two spiritual experiences I had out in the Rocky Mountains. How the song got its name was from a night that I decided to walk out into the mountains a bit later then I should of and found myself on top a mountain peak when the sun was setting. Everything before me was dressed with a brilliant shade of royal Purple and I found the world between the sun and Moon.

Looking back at the Reverie release, how do you see it from today's perspective? What would you change?

I am proud of what I did on the Reverie album, after all it was my 1st album and I wrote everything on it except the drums. All the vocals we not rehearsed, not even once, I did all the vocals sort of like a session vocalists except I had known the lyrics for years, it was my 1st time even trying to do black metal vocals... I didn't even know if I could scream or not before that day in the studio! All the bass was done in the same way no rehearsal just right on the spot in the studio. However the drummer had rehearsed for a few months and I had been playing most of the guitar riffs for years... however a few guitar riffs were also made up during the recording. The isolation album was a learning experience to say the least and I will never make up entire riffs or all the vocals or something crazy like that again on the spot with out rehearsing before hand. Thats what I did different on the sylvan realm album everything was rehearsed over and over again. Anyways you will get to hear what I would do differently soon enough because I am re writing most of the Reverie songs and will be putting them along with new songs on the next Sylvan Realm album.



Evan Madden and Jason Ian-Vaughn Eckert appear on your debut album. Who are they and how did you get in touch with them? Will they continue to play in the band?

They are both true masters of their instruments and are the best musicians I could find or ever ask for. Evan Madden is a drummer from Pennsylvania and he plays drums for a living. He teaches drums, and plays in Woods of Ypres, Woe, the Green Evening Requiem, and more. I found out that he does session drums through his web site and got in touch with him. I let him write all the drums and only had him change a few parts, I hope he continues to play in Sylvan Realm for every album I do for it was a great experience working with him. Jason Ian-Vaughn Eckert was introduced to me by Ron Vento from Nightsky Studio and Aurora Borealis. He also fit the style I was going for and was a great person to work with. I also hope to continue to work with Jason in the future for I am very happy with his performance on the album. He also plays in Aurora Borealis and Todesbonden and in the past he was in rain fell within plus a bunch of other projects.

Reverie merely had a session drummer, but the new one has two members. Were these involved in the process of creating the album as well or what has their contribution been?

Originally they were going to be session members and that's how they contributed to the album, they both wrote all their own parts to the music. However things could now change since I plan to work with them on the next album that I am writing. We are all very busy with our lives and they have a lot of other bands that they are in so we haven't had much time to get together or talk about their roles in the band for the future. For now I am writing the next album and will have them write the same way they did for the lodge of transcendence and I will just have to see how everything turns out.

How long did the recording take place? Which studio did you use and what reasons did you have for picking it? Are you satisfied with the result?

The lodge of transcendence took a very long time to record, from October 2009 until february 2011. I went to the same studio that I recorded the Reverie album at. I Enjoy recording at Nightsky studio with Ron Vento, he is very experienced in black and death metal and understands the music as well or more then anyone else I know. Plus he helped me find a session drummer for my 1st album and got me in contact with the bassist for this album. I am 100% satisfied with how the lodge came out in the end.

Are there still some ideas left over from the process of crafting this latest album?

Yes indeed... nearly a half of an album's worth of material I ended up not being able to fit into the lodge, so It will be on the next album that im working on.

Nice hidden track ... you could not resist the temptation didn't you?

I have wondered how many people will know what the hidden track is from and why I used it... so far a few people have. If you understand the hidden track and know what its from I think you will know why I used it and will enjoy the album even more so.

The layout has the same colour than the Reverie CD. Why? Do you feel somehow comfortable with this violet scheme? Why did you pick it? Do you try to express something through this?

Purple is a magic color to me... it is the color I see in my dreams, and in the spiritual world.

Compared with your first output a difference can be found. In our first interview you replied to my question in regard to the lyrics in this way:

This is everything the lyrics and artwork are about, however I don't print the lyrics... so as in life these aspects remain hidden. Few will find them, or understand them.

Have you changed your mind on this subject or why are they available now?

Reverie was suppose to be more hidden and minimalistic, plus the lyrics were rather personal to me, I wrote them for myself and didn't want to share them. However the lyrics on the lodge are just as personal, something in me changed and decided to share the lyrics. Even if people don't understand them, they can make the lyrics their own and give to them their own meaning and interpretation. I suppose this time around I had a message I wanted to share instead of personal lyrics that I wrote more for myself.

Were the pictures done by you again? Digital or analogue? You seem to prefer the former lately do you?

Yes I did all the pictures besides the picture of me standing with the mountains in the background. I will always do all the artwork this way for my albums. I would like to do the pictures in analogue however I am much better with digital cameras. Analogue looks better, however all my extra money goes to music so a digital camera is good enough.

Somewhat interesting is the concept expressed through them. The front and the back cover each show an escape, while the ones inside appear generally barred and with a considerable obstacle. Do you see this as a reflection of your art? Is it easy to comprehend on a first glance, but difficult to actually grasp once the inside of it is reached; the outer picture of the booklet being an invitation to explore this 'realm'?

The artwork on the cover is based on emanation and seeing the light in the darkness and the darkness in the light. The cover is the spiritual realm emanating through the lodge, I suppose you could say it is an invite into the Sylvan Realm. The windows and doors I used are suppose to be gateways into the lodge. However I wanted to depict the lodge as being hidden and mysterious... a lost and abandoned place.

If you add to this the name of your album to this train of thought than a somehow perplexing issue arises:

While it is the lodge of transcendence, it is based in the immanence, but seems offers no easy escape to a visitor. To free oneself from this place might seem to take some effort. Moreover, the place looks worn down and may even break once the winds become too strong, so it does not look like a house worth to reside in. Do you think that metaphysics still have a place today? I vaguely remember having read somewhere that they are perceived as being dead.

I would say that your interpretation of the artwork is very different from the meaning i assigned to the artwork and how I see it. The lodge is a lost abandoned gateway into the spiritual world that was left behind from the modern world... however I don't give any explanation to the artwork in the album so I am sure everyone will interpret it in their own way. The lodge is not something to escape, rather something to seek out and behold its majesty. I do believe metaphysics still have a place in the world today. Metaphysics is rather broad and refers to an entire school of philosophy, I am more so interested in the spiritual side of metaphysics personally. I know that many still use metaphysics in their thoughts and beliefs.

Did you start your own label? It says Reverie Recordings on the CD. Have you been unable to find a proper one or do you prefer the liberty of distributing the stuff on your own?

I did start Reverie Recordings as a home and means of distributing my music for Sylvan Realm. Originally I was going to work with ATMF records but in the end I decided to do everything myself and own all the rights to my music. In this day and age with the computer and all the music networking sites there isn't a lot a small label can do for a band that the band can't already do for itself. I would work with a record label and plan on contacting a selected handful of them to release my next album. However I will hold out until I find the ideal record deal, so I am not in a rush to sign with anyone and could very well end up releasing the next few albums under Reverie Recordings.

In case someone wants to get in touch with you, how can interested folks do this? Where can people buy your music? Is the Reverie CD still available?

In the future I will make a website for Reverie Recordings, however for now theres a few different ways to reach me. I do have a Facebook page for Sylvan Realm, as well as a Myspace page www.myspace.com/thetruereverie those are the best ways to contact me, as well on both pages is my personal e mail address. People can buy my music directly from me, I also have my albums up on e bay for fairly cheep prices. In the future I will also have digital downloads and will have Sylvan Realm available at Amazon.com. The other route I take is I trade with underground labels so there are a ton of underground distributors, labels, and web shops that have my albums for sale. I do have about 300 Reverie - Isolation cd's left that I am selling and trading.

Some final comments if you like?

Every answer every truth lays in one glimmering moment, one fragment of time. One subtle glimpse of a faint flicker from a distant eternal fire burning deep within the darkness.

Sylvan Realm – The Lodge of Transcendence (2011)

(USA; Black Metal, Death Metal, Acoustic, Heavy Metal)

6 Tracks (CD – Reverie Recordings) -_- (41:38)

<http://www.myspace.com/thetruereverie>

It does not take an intro, it does not take some sort of interlude to progress from the one and only release of Reverie to the Sylvan Realm project. The first seconds of the first track direct the attention of the listener on the pathway the person behind it decided to move on. No time to breathe, no time for a short moment for collecting one's thoughts; a beat and of it goes ... everything earlier is simply swept away.

Indeed, the music seems to have undergone a certain evolution since the days of Reverie. Black Metal? In certain boundaries this has some truths in it, but once the album is examined from a broader perspective, then the reduction to this one genre alone seems unnecessarily as well as artificially limited. The opener reveals this progression neatly, because in it most of the elements are presented succinctly. Melodic, powerful, well arranged and some well-crafted riffs make up the performance of Sylvan Realm. Death metal makes an appearance as well, along small influences from other genres; like heavy metal or even thrash.

Riff structures, as they are often used in the black metal genre, appear on a rather small scale and limitation in facets is avoided at all costs. Instead, the music is rich in facets and various influences. Multiple layers woven together instead of a simplistic approach – Disappear into the Landscape –, a neat transition between the compositions – Temple of Not – and even choir parts – The Lodge of Transcendence – are now part of the oeuvre of Sylvan Realm. The breadth of the conceptual approach is by no means covered by all of these examples, but they give an indication on what to expect on this recording.

The title track should be emphasized in this respect. Rhythm models that break all barriers of conventionality and a level of variation in terms of the arrangements make it exceptional on this debut album. It is especially due to ideas like the closing motive and the progressive influences presented in it that might leave the listener astounded about the richness in facets of this output. Nevertheless, it would be fair point to describe the way some aspects appear a slightly bit random and as not being fully immersed in the rest of the art; this would be especially true in terms of Twilight Kingdom. Many aspects presented on 'The Lodge of Transcendence' merge very naturally though. Be it the various types of vocals, would it be the breaks and interludes in the compositions, nothing really gives the impression of being alien to the concept in any serious way.

Twilight Kingdom:

The closing composition of this album is a track that differs significantly from everything that makes up the dominant part of this album. No more metal guitars, drums and aggressive vocals. Instead, a play



of acoustic guitars together with a calm voice try to compensate the listener for the heaviness this person had to endure from the very first second up to this very composition. It is a counterpoint and a strong one at that. Nearly nine minutes in length it provides a wonderful example of how a small set of instruments can be used to create a very dense and intense listening experience. Empyrium comes to the mind, though not their early works but their later ones. A difference might appear in the tone and direction of the music. While the Germans had a slightly depressing touch in their art, the Americans are a bit more uplifting. Similar are both attempts the role of the vocals, whose part appears in a narrating manner, but not excessively in terms of the share that they would take in the music; the instruments have a lot of room to unfold their atmosphere. What can be criticized though is the way this style appears on the record. Unlike on the Reverie recording, the acoustic part gives rather an impression of being an appendix, rather than an essential aspect of the music, which 'moves' like a red line through the album.

The hidden track:

As outlined in the interview, this thing is suppose to have a special meaning ... but I can tell you it did not reveal itself in the first several spins that I listened to this thing ... it clearly did not. Maybe it is because English is not my mother tongue that I am not able to understand everything of this distorted voice. Even after a rather intense listening attempt, I failed to get it ... so; you have to look for another reviewer to take up on this issue and to reveal the mystery, which surrounds this hidden track. Well, SR are not the only band that wants to have the final laugh, because further examples are: Karjalan Sissit's Tanssit On Loppu Nyt or Nattefrost's Blood and Vomit.

To sum the impressions up:

Who would have thought of this evolution of the band? Sylvan, the person behind this band, seems to have been quite anxious to bombard the listener with this new release of his and therefore set the pace right from the first second of the debut. From then on, the listener is bombarded with ideas and concepts like there would be no tomorrow and in a way rather uncommon in the extreme metal realm. The reference to Empyrium does by no means cover the array and breadth of performance of Sylvan Realm's debut album. In fact, the Germans always used a rather limited but really well crafted approach, while the Americans would be unable to follow such a narrowed down concept. This similarity in atmosphere as well as attitude awakes the resemblance in the mind of the listener.

The Lodge of Transcendence is an excellent release in many respects and sets the barrier extremely high for the things to come. The easiness, with which the band transgresses all barriers of conventionality and combines them on their debut into an eclectic showbag that contains something for a lot of people, is fascinating indeed. Extreme metal on a high level, loaded with sweet riffs and ideas, as well as an attitude to try something fresh. Nothing but highly recommended.

Mørke

Hello there ... how are you and how does it feel to live in Italy right now?

Life in Italy is not so exciting ... I go on.

Mørke dates back to 2004. Can you write a bit about its history? Who found it and what were the original intentions behind it? What are your releases so far?

Mørke started as a black metal band and I was the founder with Rob, a friend and classmate who shared with me the passion for black metal music. The original intention was nothing more than creating some stuff that reflects our feelings and soon, Cola and Jaco joined in the band. I know those guys because they played in other extreme music bands in my town. They are still playing in black metal and grindcore bands. They helped us not like session members but like true members, giving their advices in all compositions. I was inspired a lot by some black metal masterpieces especially Burzum's "Hvis Lyset tar Oss" and "Filosofem", Mayem's "De mysteriis dom Sathanas", and also Nargaroth's "Gelibte des Regens". I listened for hours every day but I didn't have special goals...one day i took a guitar and started to create riffs, adding something more every day. My friends supported me, and we created Demo I (2004).

You have some additional side-projects do you? Can you enlighten us a bit about them? What kind of music do you play in these, what is their current status etc.?

Two projects, Wij and Ovskum/Mørke.

Wij was a black metal side project with two other friends, Atro and Rjudrok. We were interested to create a kind of atmospheric black metal and ambient, realizing Demo I. Wij was for me the other side of my black metal feelings. Mørke communicated me angry, hate and a sense of wrapping darkness. Wij is sadness, solitude, isolation and contains a lot of ambient music. The stuff was created with Rjudrok and Atro. After Wij's Demo I (2005) we split-up only because we didn't have other ideas to express. But nothing is decided once and for all. Atro helped us later in Ovskum/Mørke project.

Ovskum/Mørke is not a side project; I created with Ovskum three albums between 2005 and now, and I consider it a main Project like Mørke. It's currently active and I hope it will remain.

Why did you pick the name Mørke? What does it mean to you and why did you use a Scandinavian language?

Mørke means darkness, a simple name that fits perfectly with the early ideas. Using the Scandinavian language was our way to make a tribute to all bands that inspired me a lot. Now I am very far from black metal, far from black metal way of life and from any ideal behind a name like Mørke. A name is only a name.

The Metal Archives lists three members – Filo (Guitar), Rob (Guitar), Cola (Bass) –, how are these involved in the song-writing? Is it a shared or a joined effort? Has this changed over the years?

The metal archives forgot Jaco, drummer and vocalist of the first demo. As I said before, Cola, Rob and Jaco were all involved in the composition of the first demo, helping with their instrument. After the first demo, Cola and Jaco left the band; their music style was grindcore? Hardcore? (I don't listen to those genres so I can't distinguish). The unifying characteristic of the first demo was the combination of angry and sometimes fast music, with dark and cold melodies. After the first demo I understood that Jaco and Cola preferred the anger and brutality of grind and I was, day by day, more inspired in ambient music. I searched for gloomy atmosphere. In the second demo, M109LRGB, Rob created the main guitar riff and I played bass, cello and synth. A lot of things changed. We discovered other interesting musician, from cosmic music to drone music. The cold of the space, the distance and the unknown were very attractive for us. After this work Rob left the band and from 2006 to now, due to other activities and I'm alone but he still supports me.



Interestingly, the tracks you send me hardly contain any vocals left alone drums; these were originally intended for the split with Shaggai. How come? An exception?

Shaggai split-up and lost their records due to computer crash. I recorded also a cosmic black metal track that should be published with the ambient track, but I preferred to leave unpublished because it fit neither with Shaggai music, nor with the official track. But in those days I discovered that the unpublished track can feet and I'm trying to making a reissue of this work, not for a split but for a full-length concept album, including the old track revisited and the old unpublished track revisited.

How would you compare your first demo – which has rather short track lengths – to your latest release, whose music seems to be much more complex? What evolution has the band taken over the years?

The length of the tracks and their structure are not so important. The important things are the feelings. I had lot of things to communicate, not always sadness and despair, but fear, alienation, and finally in the last album "ES" the struggle between opposite feelings, from nightmares to dreams. The evolution of feelings goes on with evolution of music. If you want to grasp only some feelings or express one particular thought you don't need a lot of evolution in music. You can say a message better then

before but it's the same message. That's why black metal is quite the same. I needed to express the deepest part of my self, with unknown and unexpected feelings or stream of consciousness. That goal requires something more experimental than previous kind of music. It doesn't mean that I tried to create a genre. I only tried to follow myself and I'm not the guy that I was six years ago. To follow myself I needed to empty my mind from theories, genre clichés, and thoughts. Obviously the music result very complex to understand for who is involved in one genre, in one feeling, in one method but it could be easy for a mind without attachment. The evolution over the years is for me a progressive emancipation from structures...a progressive grasping of deeper feelings. Complex doesn't mean for me technical, "with a lot of instruments", without a clear structure. Complex is also creating a good song with 3 chords and minimalism could be even harder.

Can people expect a mixture between ambient and black metal on your forthcoming release or was this combination something you tried out earlier but have abandoned again?

As I said before, I can seldom express myself with black metal. Better with ambient, drone, psychedelic things. I'd like to record black metal-influenced things only with Ovskum/Mørke project or Ovskum band. Black metal is not a dead genre but I have to follow my inspiration that brings me to other feelings. BM is great if becomes ever more extreme, more claustrophobic, more insane. For now I'm inspired only with Ovskum because he became day by day deeper. In 2009 I recorded Ovskum/Mørke III "Weltanshauung" that is black metal with ambient and industrial influences: i was inspired in creating black metal, after 3 years of experimental music! If I make music alone, I think I have abandoned the combination between black metal and ambient.

How would you describe the music on Es?

Es is like a travel in the centre of mind, an expression of how feelings rise and change over the times. Anxiety, fear, life energy and redemption and desire, are for me the deepest part of our ego. Intellectual thinking cannot grasp the hidden emotions inside our souls and I tried it with music. The music is about mystery and feelings of nightmares and dreams witch are the deepest part of ourselves. That's my interpretation of my music; maybe someone could see something else, or nothing at all. The beauty of music is also the pluralism of interpretations.

Does the name of your forthcoming demo 'Es' refer to the novel of Stephen King? Or what would be the meaning behind it?

According to Freudian and Jungian theories, es is the deepest part of our ego, the part of feelings and desires that we don't know. Those feelings are strong and sometimes dominates us. I don't know if our es is totally revealed with a correct interpretation of a dream, I'm neither a scientist nor a psychologist. I tried to reveal feelings of dreams and I thought that Es was the right title

Your compositions are generally longer. Why is this so? What is the underlying idea behind it all? Do you prefer a rather complex approach over something shorter and distilled?

Length is a spontaneous consequence of my way to create music. I don't try to follow patterns and the last works are more similar to jam sessions than songs. I can't say that I prefer short or long tracks; they come as they are.

Interestingly, you music tends to lack drums as well as vocals; at least in the two tracks that you sent to me.

I like a lot vocals and drums, but I don't follow the rule "put a drum in your song". Sometimes it's not necessary

M109LRGB is the title of one of your releases. What does the name refer to and why was this split album never created? Who is this band 'Shaggai' to which the additional notes at the Metal Archives refer to?

M109LRGB is a barred spiral galaxy approximately 83.5 ± 24 million light-years away in the constellation Ursa Major. M109 can be seen southeast of the star Phecda (γ UMa).

Another and a different band would be Ovskum / Mørke. How does it differ from the other band Mørke? Who is Ovskum? Is he a person with whom you compose music or how does one have to understand these two words?

Ovskum is the band leader and guitarist from a black metal band called Ovskum. Ovskum/Mørke is the result of our collaboration and it differs a lot from Mørke (and also Ovskum) because all the stuff is created by two composers without hierarchy. It's like a band with two minds, not very usual.

Ovskum/Mørke started in 2005 and we published three albums (2 full length and one track for a split). The music changed but the passion remains

One release is entitled: Lavori ambient selezionati 2005/2009. Could you write a bit about this demo and what was the idea behind it? What distinguished it from a Mørke one?

I think it's the most experimental release made by us.. the title means in Italian "selected ambient works 2005/2009". Our release are very different to each other and the difference is not only between Ovskum/Mørke and Mørke but also with first Mørke and last Mørke or first Ovskum/Mørke and last Ovskum/Mørke. In this specific case, "Lavori ambient selezionati 2005/2009" is a drone and ambient thing, totally instrumental, recorded by Me, Ovskum and also Atro (from Wij and Ovskum)

When and how was it started? What ideas do you try to pursue with this band?

During four years we created some isolated tracks very weird and eerie but also very fascinating for me. And we decided to bridge the gap between those track, trying to create a unique album. This album differs to all records for the time required to create, some days, and adjusting...at least the entire 2008. I've never worked so hard for releasing music

Is there a difference in the way you approach the song-writing and the composition of the music, compared to Mørke? How does one have to imagine the way you create music for this project? Do both members have an equal impact on the art or does it differ in some respect?

A very interesting question...My method to write a song is divided in two phase. In the first I try to empty my mind, forget everything and catch the right inspiration moments. In Ovskum/Mørke, obviously, we make music when have simultaneous inspiration...for example...Ovskum plays something cool...I play something during his riff or after, then he fasten another riff...and so we go on. In The second phase, when the main ideas are set, we are listening a lot of time the tracks, selecting the most expressive moments and giving to them the right importance. The first phase is instinct and inspiration, the second is critical listening and trying to give a global sense...In our music we have quite always an equal impact but some moments are more inspired by Ovskum's style other by my style. Sometimes we have different roles, one plays riffs, the other concentrates in atmosphere. It's important in a duo to leave some moment strictly personal and others collective.

What are the core essences of this band; speaking in musical terms? How would you describe the art and releases?

I'd recommend the listening of all Ovskum/Mørke works, if someone wants to grasp the core essences of this band. Our music is evolving and it's hard to describe feelings with words. The only thing I could say is that we always tried to achieve deepest feelings as possible, becoming more extreme day by day. Extreme doesn't mean necessary Angry, dark or evil. It could mean also estranging, visceral, introspective, psychedelic.

What kind of instruments do you use for Ovskum / Mørke? Some of the tracks you send me suggest that they have a cello in it.

Yes, a play cello and also flute, guitars, bass, piano, synths and every object that I find in my home with interesting sound...my favourite things are expressive and atmospheric sounds. Also Ovskum plays everything

What is the idea behind the compositions Weltanschauung?

We started to create a song without an idea behind, as we always do, following inspiration. After, we thought that the song was perfect for describing the feeling of a soldier or a citizen during the world war. If previous work were untitled, this time we decided to give a certain contextualization. But Weltanschauung has neither a political impact, nor a political project and the title suggested was only a key to the reading. I was thinking about the glorification of ideals, the renunciation of self thought in favour of collective exaltation, the hate of war, the tragic consequences, the end of a domination dream, the pain that remains after...the misery of human condition, no matter if winners or losers. Weltanschauung is for me exaltation and tragedy.

Are there further or other collaborations planned in the future?

Not for now: I prefer to concentrate my energies with Mørke and Ovskum/Mørke.

What is the "Estrema Corona Fano"? The Metal Archives has it listed in the band entry of Ovskum / Mørke.

Estrema Corona Fano (E.C.F.) is for me, a union of extreme musician and bands from Fano. From black metal to Experimental music... E.C.F. bands are Mørke, Ovskum, Necrolust, Valak, Ovskum / Mørke, Wij, 731 Urkved, Oncixo.

Speaking of music in general, how do you start to compose it? Do you have certain kind of influential art that you turn to? Do you have certain music you like to take 'inspiration' from?

As I said before, I tried to empty from music clichés and theories but it's not always possible. New Inspirations are also good sometimes because they help to open your mind and let you better express yourself. Inspiration are dangerous only when they deny to think something more. My first inspirations were very strong...Burzum, Nargaroth, Mayhem, Ulver...now I'm inspired to very different bands that I discovered over 7 years. When I created Es, I was listening a lot some psychedelic groups like Hash Jar Tempo, Third Ear Band, Earth, Popol Vuh, Brian Eno, Jon Hassell, Klaus Schulze, Vampire Rodents, first Pink Floyd... and also my previous work with Ovskum/Mørke helped me.

How have the responses on your music been so far?

I had a good responses with black metal works, especially "demo1". A.M.F. Label decided to make a reprint of 400 copies, put one track in a BM compilation, and I got some positive reviews. When I decided to make experimental music it seems that labels and webzines forgot me. During the last three years, I didn't receive good or bad reviews, simply nobody talks about me. Perhaps, by following my inspiration, I made the opposite thing a black metal fan could expect. Ovskum/Mørke became more popular in the underground scene. Some people appreciated Ovskum/Mørke works and we found also two interested labels.

Do you have had any live experiences already? Do you plan to hit the stage or are your bands generally nothing but studio projects?

I didn't have any experience and I think I won't have them with my music. Try to imagine a live with Ovskum/Mørke "Lavori ambient selezionati 2005/2009" with at least 10 musician, with abstract song without riffs, without drums with flute, cello, lead guitars, synth, strange object sounds...a true mess! Only Mørke demo1 and Ovskum/Mørke Weltanshauung are possible. The only future hope could be playing "Weltanshauung" in a live with Ovskum band...

Are there still any of your releases available? If so, how can they be acquired?

Perhaps Ovskum/Mørke III – Weltanshauung, for "Darkbabel Records". Ovskum/Mørke I was published by centreofwood, Mørke – Demo1 was printed by A.M.F Label 5 years ago, maybe sold out. M109LRGB and Ovskum/Mørke II are still unpublished. Es will

be published soon for Punkistpop netlabel. Wij was self produced in 30 copies sold out. If you want to listen to my works, mail me before. Buying is harder due to few copies published. I hope to find a label interested in printing my unpublished works or reprint the other. But I've never searched a lot for people interested in my music, I prefer to spend my time creating music rather than trying to become accepted by the labels.

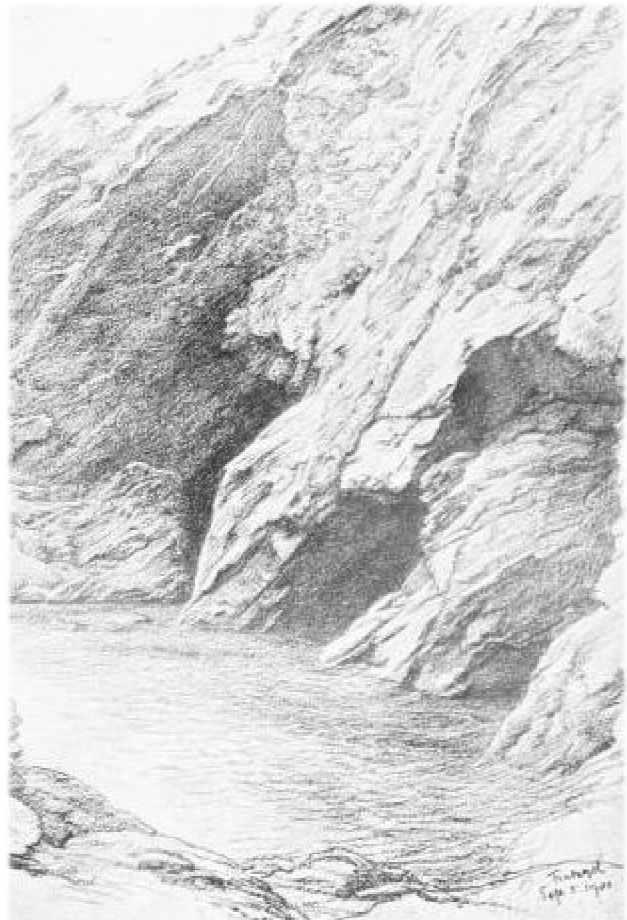
How can people reach you?

By mail... Mørke@email.it or Filippo.bodini@gmail.com

If you want to listen to my music mail me, if you want to ask, to speak to know me...mail me. When Es will be out in few weeks, go here

<http://www.punkistpop.org/news.html>

I would like to thank Roman, the owner of punkistpop netlabel, a guy who believes in my music. I hope to find a new label while keeping punkistpop netlabel, so that everyone can get my release in cd, vinyl, cassette and online mp3.



Some final words you would like to share?

Thanks a lot for the detailed interview, for the opportunity you gave me to speak about my music. I hope you will find a lot of interesting bands in the underground scene.

Mørke

(Italy; Black Metal, Ambient, Drone, Noise)

<http://morke.altervista.org/>

First of all and before some space on the reviews is 'wasted', this band from Italy plays music in a style that might not appeal to everyone. Even though the term 'black metal' was used as a prime description of the band's performance or oeuvre, the recent outputs show undoubtedly a progression into a quite different realm of the arts: less metal and more experimental one. Longer tracks, a more in complexity and also considerably influences from the ambient, noise and drone genres can be discovered. So, in case someone had the chance to lay hands on their prime demo, this person might be surprised about the development this band has taken.

Mørke – m109lrgb

2 Tracks (CDr – Self-released) -_-_- (20:13)

The music on this demo was actually meant to be part of a split album with the band Shaggai. As outlined in the interview, this never came to happen and as such, the Italian band distributed the music by themselves... and 'alone'.

In terms of the music, a rather minimalist approach can be found on this recording. Repetitive, with a small focus and only a few elements, this would sum up the performance of the band on 'm109lrgb'.

STOP ... some explanation on the name:

M109 or to be more precise 'Messier 109' is a spiral galaxy in the constellation Ursa Major; which is Latin for Great Bear. It has gained some prominence due to supernova that had been discovered – always keep the distances in space in the back of the head as well as Einstein, thank you – in the March 1956 in it.

LRGB is an abbreviation for 'Luminance, Red, Green and Blue' and is a common expression used in amateur photography.

The first track comes with a distinct guitar motive, which is repeated again and again over the entire length of this track. It is accompanied by some ambient textures/sounds in the background. Some variations appear in the music, but the general approach remains the same: a slightly shrill guitar with some dreamy stuff in the background. It has some hypnotic as well as fascinating touch, but might be hard to endure due to the overall minimalism.

Coda, the second track opens quite silent, but progresses then into a drone-inspired piece of music. Here, the music is played general faster, while the motives show some similarities to the first one. Yet, in terms of the atmosphere and the approach, not much of a difference can be found between these two compositions.

Ovskum/Mørke – Lavori ambient selezionati 2005/2009

4 Tracks (???) -_-_- (63:30)

More of the same ... but different as well. This collaboration between Ovskum & Mørke offers not many metal elements again. As should be obvious from the information presented above already, the tracks are rather long and those two bands used the space to fill it with music that has a certain emphasis on ambient and drone. Guitars appear here as well, but on a smaller scale than on the afore-discussed album.

Primo movimento

The most interesting part of this track is its opening. A cello plays some minimalist melody in a slow manner, which later progresses into some dronish metal type of thing. It increased in intensity as well as in volume over the length, but maintains the characteristic and slightly chaotic type of music. The

dominating aspect is a dense guitar texture, while some additional guitar elements can vaguely be discerned in the background. Furthermore, ambient and noise elements appear also but on a small scale and cannot be identified easily.

Interestingly, the progression of the tracks is something the listener would not expect from the first second onwards. A rather depressive opening changes to something that might sound rather hectic and intense.

Secondo movimento

Similarly to the preceding track, also this one has a dense wall of guitars, but a bass-guitar works as some sort of a counterpoint. Moreover, a rather contrary movement can be found here: while the first minutes of this track are rather noisy and intense, the more they actually pass the less such makes an appearance. Later the cello is able to add some sounds to the slightly melancholic melody of the keyboards.

Terzo movimento

Track number three has the cello again, but combined with some strange (odd, weird) guitar play. While the former plays a melody in the background a chaotic disturbance moves to and fro in terms of the volume. This changes in a way that resembles the preceding composition: from an 'extreme' state to something calmer and more accessible as well as enjoyable. Ambient with various types of noises take over the part then.

To sum the impressions up:

These three tracks seem rather a bit too monotonous at times and unable to really shine in any meaningful way. While the cello is nice for instance and also the first part of the third composition has its moments, Mørke has difficulties in keeping the quality up; which is not an easy thing anyway, considering the length of the tracks. Those who have a rather open mind and try to explore as much as they can – and find – might want to try this release.

Ovskum / Mørke – Weltanschauung

The name suggests as much, this is a collaboration; see the interview again. A further one might be misleading, though. A Ukrainian NSBM band also used the name of this track for one of their releases, but the Italian artist is by no means associated with this ideology; the similarity is rather something that happened by chance.

Vocals, yes finally the listener is able to hear some vocals; in case someone was wondering, all of the demos written on above are instrumentals. The music is raw, noisy black metal and comes with a rather steady pace. How everything merges is actually quite nice and the dronish elements add a certain intensity to this approach. Similar to the music by Mørke also this track is rather complex and sounds overloaded due to it. It is possible to listen to it, but the length of over twenty-three minutes makes it difficult to concentrate on it. Weltanschauung is not bad, but definitely of a kind that will find an audience, the problem with it is that it is simply bloated.

Mørke – Es

(Experimental, Ambient, Black Metal, Drone)

4 Tracks (MP3 – Netlabel: Punkistpop) - _ - _ - (46:29)

<http://www.punkistpop.org/>

'Es' is a strange release and the average length might already indicate in what kind of realms the band like wander off to. The music here hardly qualifies as black metal. Actually, longer passages with real metal and the core elements of said genre do not appear at all. Rather, the guitars are used in order to create some dissonance, some noise effects and something to break the overall minimalism in the art. It should be emphasised that this latest release of the Italian band is by no means easy and 'catchy' stuff.

The progression towards non-metal stuff continues with 'Es' but this approach has become more varied as well as better arranged. Four tracks appear on this latest release and each of them has a distinct set of sounds and arrangements.

The following track list appears at the Internet Archives, from which the music can be downloaded (link below):

Nightmares...

The album opens in a way that wakes memories on the preceding outputs of the band: noisy ambient/drone music with some metal facets. As nightmares tend to be rather scary and intense, the music reflects this certain extreme state of mind appropriate. Therefore, the listener has to endure a lot of noise & industrial-like sounds, which create the disturbance in the mind and refuse the body to get the necessary rest. In terms of the style the music has a guitar texture, whose impact differs but is always recognizable, while additional effects and samples were woven into this.

Interestingly, this offensive characteristic only appears in the first half or so ... while later the music becomes more and more minimalist; the guitars disappear, noises vanish and so on. Towards the end, only a very reduced ambient/drone texture is left. Everything is dark, everything is calm.

...

The dream-like state continues with this composition, but switches into a different realm. A slightly dissonant flute along with an acoustic guitar set the mood here. A vague melody is being played and the listener has some time to let the thoughts drift afar.

...

The dissonance is back, but appears in a new way now. A wild play of the guitars is accompanied by a certain post-rock rhythm in the percussions at times, which adds a nice dynamic to the approach. Overall, the third track has generally a larger focus on the rhythms and a play with the instruments; the opener was more experimental in this respect.

...And dreams...

Remember the hit by the Eurythmics entitled 'Sweet Dreams'; which later became a proper interpretation by Marilyn Manson? Well, such diabolic worlds cannot be found on this recording. Instead, the listener is confronted with some strange chanting like thing, which sounds like a lullaby gone wrong. Guitars play a melody as well as create some gentle noise effects, but it all gives the impression that something of the nightmarish scenes still linger the back somewhere. Even though you hope to let these pass by, they never ever vanish entirely.

Finally ... everything ends in a slightly chaotic state of mind ... not too surprising, when you think of it.

An attempt to sum the impressions up:

Those four tracks have no lyrics and come also without vocals. Those tracks are not easy digestible and find the art appreciable seems like a tricky thing. Judging from several spins it seems like Mørke tried to create art for arts sake, whose underlying concept wants to be explored as well as understood by an active examination of the facets. How these fit together, how the music progresses over the length of those four tracks leaves open a realm for speculation as well as analysis. I will leave it at that.

Note:

The release can be downloaded from this site for free:

<http://www.archive.org/details/Morke-Es2011>

Final comments:

As someone who had never had a chance to listen to the first output of this band – I was also too lazy to ask and could not trace a download for it – the music of this Italian band leaves a slightly bitter taste. Not so much because the art should be described as being bad or generally flawed, but more in the sense that at times everything gives the impression of being overloaded and done over excess. Their art seems to be an attempt to break out of the strict corset of the black metal genre and move towards something more experimental, while trying to preserve the extreme sounds and noises of their origin. It seems natural to find noise in the concept as well, because through this the intensity of the compositions is pushed further still. Nevertheless, purists will have a difficult time with their art and as such a recommendation can only be given to those who wander on the shores of the black metal realm anyway.

Stillheten

Greetings to Sweden. How are you and how is your band doing?

I'm fine thank you. My band, which consists only of me, is also fine. A bit bored maybe, the band not me. Not a lot of activity band-wise now unfortunately.

Why don't you start with a translation of the band name? What does Stillheten refer to and why did you pick it?

Well Stillheten should be translated as 'the stillness'. I like it because it has a certain melancholy to it. In Swedish it is often used referring to an almost religious calmness. It is also common in descriptions of nature, like an absence of civilization.

When did you start this band and what type of music did you have in mind back then? What were the reasons for your decision? Why does this rather minimalist music have such a fascination for you? Was there an album or a band that had a profound impact on you?

I started Stillheten during the spring 2009. I was in a band back then (which never made it out of the rehearsal room) playing bass guitar and while working on some stuff at home for the band I came up with the main themes for 'I det gryende ljusets bleka sken'.

One album was particularly important and that was 'In the Pendulums Embrace' by Oren Ambarchi, and especially the third track where he uses acoustic guitar along with the experimental and droning sounds of his processed electric guitar. This track was very important for me in kind of pointing out a path, sound wise, which I wanted to explore further. That exploration resulted in the EP 'I ensamhetens kapell'.

Do you have some additional projects aside from Stillheten?

No, not at the moment. But I am working on a collaborative project which hopefully will result in a release, maybe during the autumn.

Is this type of reduced art some sort of a counterpoint to the hastiness of our times; the constant bombardment with news, information and what not?

I don't really think like that. I try to create music that I like myself. The only plans or agendas I have with my music are strictly musical. But if any of my, not so many, listeners hears the sounds as a counterpoint to the information overflow or constant shifting of attention, then that is also what my music is. I can't control what my music means or represent. I know what I think about it but everyone who hears it has his own understanding of the music.

As you reside in Stockholm, does the city have an impact on your and how you compose music? What is your opinion on living in a large town vs. living in a small suburb community or even in a village? How would a different environment influence your art?

Well that last question will hopefully get answered during the upcoming months. I have recently moved to the smaller town Eskilstuna about an hour west of Stockholm because of a job. But I don't think the environment I live in affect my music that much, at least not in a way I am aware of. Of course everything you experience affects you and the way you express yourself. But mostly we are not aware of the effect and it can be very difficult to try to sort out what effects you in what way.

Do you want the listener to experience the music? Create some sort of image in the head or an emotion? In the sense that this minimalism requires the listener to pay more attention to what you play?

Of course I have pictures in my mind when I play and compose. And I would of course be happy if I managed to communicate some of these. But communicating through music is a difficult question. You can definitely invoke feelings in the listener but to control which feelings and which images that the music creates in the listener is impossible. Of course listeners who has a background similar to my own is probably likely to see what I see when listening but I can never know.

How minimalist do you think music should get? Is this already taking the whole concept too far: <http://www.archive.org/details/wh057> (you do not need to listen to the whole thing)? Is there a limit in which it seems difficult if not impossible to 'reach' the listener?

Well, from my point of view at least, there is no limit. I mean, the composer don't have any responsibility to reach anyone but himself (of course if you are not paid to create music that reaches some specific group, like in film music or commercials, then you have the responsibility to execute your task as successful as you can). It is up to the listener to decide if he gets "reached" by the music or not. And of course, some music mite be of a kind that doesn't really reach anyone and that music will not be very popular. But still you can not say that it should not exist. If the composer finds pleasure in making it he should keep making it. But when talking about limits for minimalism I think that the extremities have already been explored as far as you could possibly imagine with LaMonte Young and the like during the sixties and early seventies. Young composed what is probably the most "minimal" work you could think of with just two notes, an open perfect fifth to be held for as long as it takes, or something like that. And I mean, under the right circumstances anything can be art. It depends on how you experience it.



Generally, your music gives the impression of being rather dark and melancholic. What do these facets mean to you and is there a chance to hear future releases with a larger amount of contrast?

Much of the music I have done is a bit gloomy that is true. I, like many other artists, am drawn towards melancholy and I have always felt that it appeals to me. I simply don't find much pleasure in either writing nor listening to happy music. I don't really know why but it is simply who I am. But I do find that at least some of the more recent material I have done is less dark. More thoughtful maybe.

When it comes to the song-writing or the composition of art, how do you approach this problem? As the tracks do not always have a melody that easily reveals itself, it might be interesting to know where you start with your art. Do you play around with the guitar a bit, do you have a certain idea in the back of the head or how would you describe your first step?

I would say that it differs from piece to piece. But it usually starts with the guitar. I use a lot of different tunings but I don't like retuning my guitars so I tend to work 1 cycles. When I have completed a piece I start to retune my guitar and try to find a tuning that I like. Then I play with that tuning for days, maybe weeks or months and slowly something begins to grow out of that. Then the actual composing starts and I build a piece out of what I have experienced during the time with that particular tuning. This is kind of the main cycle that is varied in many ways depending on what instrument I am using at the moment and on how much time I have to play.

How long does it take you to get one track done? Do you scrap a lot of ideas?

Sometimes it comes together rather quick, but normally I need a lot of time for the ideas to develop and mature. I also want to feel comfortable playing before recording and during the sort of rehearsing the pieces tend to develop further.

What instruments were used by you so far? Is there any chance to hear some additional ones in the future? Is this a bell in 'När skuggen saknas' or did you create this 'noise' via electronics?

I have used 12 string acoustic, classical and electric guitars, electric bass, some piano and small percussive instruments. The bell you mention is actually a glass bowl. I have only used electronics for effects and I prefer to keep things as organic and analog as I can.

Did you visit music school or did you learn them by yourself?

I have a theoretical music background with a year and a half of studies at the university of Stockholm, studying mostly music history and music analysis. But I have no education regarding musical practice.

That you rely on Dark Ambient textures is one important facet of your music, but to hear them in such a minimalist manner might surprise a bit. How would you describe their role in your art?

I like working with textures, especially when I can combine a texture with something else. I try to create drones that harmonize in an interesting way with the rest of the sounds. In that way the drone sort of evolves into something more than a constant although still serving as the musical womb, you know.

Do you use field-recordings? In case you do not, do you plan to do so?

I have used field-recordings for some pieces. But I am unfortunately not that good at mixing them or manipulating and combining them as I wish I was. Maybe we will see more of that in the future.

Why instrumental? Do you want to let the instruments speak for themselves or what is your intention behind this approach? How do you try to get the 'message' across to the listener?

I can't sing, as simple as that. I only want to use what I am capable of and there is only me so if I can't sing there will be no singing. I am actually pretty sure that if I could sing I would.

You have released two net releases and a physical one so far. Can you lay out the history of each of them and what the differences between these? First 'Requiem For A Loving God' and then 'I Ensamhetens Kapell', is this the correct order?

The requiem was released first and a few weeks later the second net release came out. This was sometime in December in 2009. They were in fact created during the same period of time, both of them, from spring 2009 up until their release dates.

'I ensamhetens kapell' is what came out of my wish to further explore the combination of electric bass harmonics and acoustic guitar. I was trying to create a sort of folky version of experimental drone music, inspired by that Ambarchi track I mentioned.

For the requiem I used my newly bought 12 string. It was actually a longer solo piece which I rearranged, added more parts to and recorded as a four movement suite. I use a couple of different themes which are varied and combined through the whole piece.

Would you mind translating "I Ensamhetens Kapell" into English? Why did you pick English for the one but Swedish for the other release?

'In the chapel of solitude' is probably the correct translation. I chose names for songs primarily out of the way the words sound. I want it to have a certain feel or timbre and then the language most suitable can vary.

Why 'Requiem For A Loving God'? Are we supposed to interpret this from a Nietzschean perspective that God is dead? Do you interpret this supernatural being in the sense of the Christian mythology or do you try to move beyond it? Why is it important to write a requiem for it?

You are free to interpret it in any way you want to, by I see it as a metaphorical title. I used an 'a' to make it even more open and allow more different interpretations. But the thought is interesting I think, a loving god is lost. And maybe we are responsible for that. Who else can it be?

Frusen would be the latest output by your band and it comes on a CD. What can the listener find on it? Why only 24 copies and a handmade design?

Frusen consists of the two Eps previously released plus the title track which hasn't been released before although it has been available at my Myspace site. The title track sort of combines the styles of the other two pieces, as well as pointing out a new direction.

Who created the cover and the design of your outputs?

Everything you can see and touch is created by Andrea at D.N.A Collective. For the Eps he used some of my photos but the CD is all his creation.

A netlabel, this was the way you distributed your first two releases. Why did you pick this particular way? Will you continue to do so or will you change to something more physically?

Netlabels are great to distribute music in an easy way. I will surely use that in the future but I personally prefer physical media. So hopefully some of my future releases will be on physical formats as well.

How do you see the Creative Commons? Do you see them as a positive approach that can help bands and artists to spread their art today?

Creative Commons is a wonderful initiative and this way of working is essential in the further development of the internet as a channel for cultural expression and distribution.

As your band comes with both, what do you prefer: downloads or physical outputs? Explain in a few words, please.

I prefer physical, no doubt. But they both has their advantages. It is difficult to distribute physical works when you are literally completely unknown as I am. But I love the feel of holding a piece of work in my hands, feeling it. And of course, vinyl is the superior musical medium. So to release something on vinyl one day would be fantastic.

What music do you generally listen to? Can you name some of your favourite releases?

I listen to all kinds of things. My collection includes stuff like John Fahey and Robbie Basho, Fairport Convention and other folk artists, metal, jazz and a lot of more experimental stuff like SunnO))) and Ambarchi. I used to have a kind of musical home in metal, and mostly progressive metal, but I don't feel as strongly for the scene any more. I am having a hard time finding new metal bands that have that special thing. So I tend to listen a lot to old music. Sometimes very old, like Perotinus or Josquin du Prez.

Do you have some new music forthcoming?

I have completed some stuff that I hope to get released. A couple of different labels has shown interest but nothing has come out of it yet. Some of it is available at my Soundcloud site though.

How can people contact you? What sites do you use to spread your art?

I have a Myspace site at www.myspace.com/hosstillheten but I primarily use Soundcloud nowadays since Myspace has become nearly useless. The Soundcloud site is at <http://soundcloud.com/davidvidefrost>



Any final comments?

This is a good zine you are making and people like you mean a lot for the underground music scene.

Stillheten – Frusen

(Sweden; Ambient Folk)

8 Tracks (CD – DNA Collective) - _ _ - (45:15)

<http://www.myspace.com/hosstillheten>, <http://dnanetlabel.altervista.org/>

Frusen (Bonus track)

1 Track - _ _ - (8:44)

This would be the bonus track that had been discussed in the interview. In concept it continues where 'Requiem for a Loving God' has left off and offers music in a similar fashion. Also the setting of the facets would be the same. The strings are there, the sound of the wind ... and the like. (as I had

messed up the track list in the process of ripping it and placed this track as fifth instead of first, the confusing order of this review is a reflection of this)

Requiem for a Loving God

4 Tracks - _ _ - (17:38)

Ravens croak, the wind whistles and then an acoustic guitar tunes in, while a calm ambient texture in the background wakes memory on a church organ, whose tones sound like they would last forever. 'Movement I' would be the first track of this release but it sets the pace and the style for the entire album. Calm music, gentle tunes and a depressive or rather melancholic atmosphere, such is the art of the Swedish band.

The first two tracks all follow in the style laid out above. With the third one though, there is a difference and the melodies break out of this minimalist and reduced concept. Cheering and maybe even rejoicing is what the atmosphere has changed to. Yet those ambient textures have remained, they still linger in the background, they are still there to support the instruments. Slightly more different would be the fourth. The murmuring of water opens the composition and then some droning sound turns in, only to vanish soon after. Again the guitars tune in and play some sort of melody while some bells appear as well now and then.

I Ensamhetens Kapell (release)

3 Tracks - _ _ - (18:27)

The last three pieces on this recording are quite different. Darker, more minimalist and less cheering in style, they unfold quite a dark and haunting atmosphere. Compared with the first approach on 'Frusen', the second one has also a shift in the elements and their impact. The guitars have been reduced and appear on a smaller scale – I det gryende ljusets bleka sken – or hardly at all – När skuggen saknas and Skymming, åter skymming. Their absence is being felt, because only the ambient texture has remained, while at times the sound of a glass bowl appears; which sounds really strange and is really intense, due to the disruption that it poses to the atmosphere.

To sum the impressions up:

With summer looming large at the horizon, Stillheten's Frusen does not really give the impression of being appropriate for this season. The music is dark, minimalist and at times quite depressive. The best advice might be the one I had presented in an early review on a release of the band:

Sit back ... yes, sit back and let the strings haunt your soul. Let the melodies embrace your senses and take you on a trip into a sad and dark world. There, peace will surround the mind and provide some rest from these hasty days.

(Appeared in the first edition of this magazine)

Again, the target audience seems rather to be fans of Ambient/folk and those who like the acoustic music of Empyrium and October Falls.

Note:

The design of the release is completely handmade and actually looks great. Some drawings on the inlay – a bird or such – while in the inside to small clips with information were bound to the plastic hull; you can see some pictures of it on the DNA Collective homepage. Only 24 copies exist of this CD, so you better hurry.

Baalberith

Hello to a band who resides in the land of knights and castles. Are all ghosts under lock and key?

- ◇ Adramalech: Can you really lock ghosts up?
- ◇ Valefar: We have many things under lock and key.
- ◇ Razakel: ...

Let us start with a look on the history of the band. Who founded it, when was it founded, what were the reasons for this and how did the band evolve over the years? What kind of music did you play in the early days and has this changed since? And of course, some words on your band name, please.

- ◇ Adramalech: Razakel is best to answer this question as he's the band leader and founding member.
- ◇ Valefar: I have only be a part of the recent history of the band. I joined back in 2008 if I remember correctly. What I do know is that Baalberith was founded by current front man Razakel in back 1999 when they where known as Black Death As for the evolution of the band... I guess it's changed many a time. During the time I have been in it we have played used influence from 1st and 2nd wave black metal, experimented with doom and death metal, and a whole host of other influential styles. And as for the name, Baalberith, in Christian demonology, is the demon who tempted man into blasphemy and murder.
- ◇ Razakel: I am the founding member...It was way back in 1999, and was started as a musical project between me and ex-member Morgoth, At that time named 'Black Death', we had no intensions on taking it to the stage... A 3 track demo was recorded (But never released) titled Dark Revelations, This was similar in style to the likes of Xasthur.

Would you mind introducing the current line-up a bit?

- ◇ Razakel: Our current line-up consists of, Me – Vocals, Adramalech and Hildisvini – Guitar, Tostgi – Bass, Valefar – Drums.
- ◇ Hildisvini: I'm Hildisvíni, the newest guitarist. I joined in October 2010, or thereabouts.
- ◇ Adramalech: I play primarily lead guitar and keyboard and write most of the music, however with the new line up Hildisvini is contributing by pitching in with some tracks.

Why did it take you seven years to get your first demo (Heaven Falls, 2006) – according to the Metal Archives database – done? How have the responses been or is the information correct that its main purpose was to reach out to labels?

- ◇ Adramalech: I think the main problem was getting a settled and committed line up. Razakel can probably answer this question better.
- ◇ Razakel: As previously mentioned we released a 3 track demo titled Dark Revelations but didn't release it due to the project taking a long hiatus.

Did you use some older material for the following releases – there are three in 2008 – or were the compositions for these composed in the years after 2006?

- ◇ Adramalech: I joined in 2008 (I think) there were a couple of existing songs which were under construction. We wrote a lot of tracks during that time and had a few covers to help fill sets and albums. I think the releases where just to get something out there and capture the music.

What about those who saw the light of day in 2010? Why did you release two of them after all? How do they differ from each other?

- ◇ Adramalech: I can't comment on that as I was out the band in 2010
- ◇ Valefar: The first 'Bestial Creation' was a demo if you will, it contained 4 tracks as a warm up to the final mixed and mastered release (Abortion of Religious Futility
- ◇ Razakel: The songs featured on the bestial creation demo (released in 2010) were demos, Released as a preview to the Abortion of religious futility album.

The Metal Archives lists a considerable amount of former band members. Except for the vocals every position seems to have been rotated. What are the reasons for this? Does this not have a severe impact on the way the band sounds and is able to compose music?

- ◇ Adramalech: Starting a band is difficult. I left because I needed a break from it all and didn't want to hold the band back. You can defiantly hear the change in style as various members have come and gone.
- ◇ Valefar: I believe it was a simple case of finding the right members, from what I have gathered many left because they did not fit in or simply had to leave because of outside purposes.

Keeping these constant shifts in mind, who was generally responsible for the composition of the music?

- ◇ Adramalech: I tend to knock up a lot of rough ideas, and record them at home (so I don't forget them). We then work on them as a group at practice. It's a good system as everyone can contribute and it takes some of the pressure off.
- ◇ Valefar: Currently both Adramalech and Hildisvini share the composition, both writing songs where as all lyrical content comes from Razakel.

What about side projects? At least one member – Razakel – seems to be involved in one. What about the other band members? What type of music is played by these?

- ◇ Adramalech: I have nothing in the works, maybe after the next album I'll find more time to write music. I think it would be a more of a solo project, although saying that I hate programming drum machines. Not sure what style I'd go for, probably something a bit softer.
- ◇ Valefar: There is talk of a project being formed between me and Razakel in the future, Nothing is cast in stone!



What are the core essences of your music? Is there something that someone can be found on all of your recordings?

- ◇ Adramalech: There's probably an undercurrent of black metal elements in all our tracks whether its musical or lyrical.
- ◇ Valefar: Indeed, our Anti - Christian message is always there.

Somehow surprising is the array of different styles and sounds of your music. Abortion of Religious Futility is rather harsh and aggressive and has even some solo parts in it, while the split with Colossloth is rather midtempo and has even some doomy parts and some solos as well. Is every release a little bit different? In some respect something like a constant re-inventing?

- ◇ Adramalech: I think its more a reflection of whose in the band when the albums are written and recorded. Everyone has their own take and style and you can hear it through the variety of styles across the albums. Also, from a technical point of view Abortion of Religious Futility is a more complicated and faster as Abbadon is a technically more competent guitarist. From a personal point of view as I feel more confident with my writing and playing ability then I attempt to write more ambitious and better constructed music. I hope this becomes more apparently when you listen to the next release
- ◇ Valefar: The reason for this was ex - lead guitarist Abbadon, who was heavily inspired by Technical Death Metal and had superior guitar skill that we wanted to make use of. We tried something new because we could. Now it's back to what we do best.

What bands would you refer to as 'archetypes'?

- ◇ Adramalech: Too many to list really. We can only aspire to write something as brilliant as 'In the Nightside Eclipse' or something as mesmerising as 'Aspera Hiems Symfonia'. Still, we will keep trying to write the best music we can and maybe one day be put along side these great bands.
- ◇ Hildisvini: Taking "archetype" to mean which bands have embodied the spirit of black metal, rather than just the sound, I would have to say that all of the usual suspects qualify for me: Bathory, Emperor, Enslaved, Beherit, Immortal etc. Most of those bands are still held up today for good reasons. I myself am also particularly partial to the more rhythmic examples of the genre as well, such as Sacramentum and Varathron.

Do you prefer the raw sound from Abortion of Religious Futility over the darker but more bass-loaded one from the Colossloth split? What dominates of these your releases or are these just two extremes and the overall attempt shows both facets?

- ◇ Adramalech: I don't think the split was intended to be so bassy, I'd put it more down to the mixing. I didn't intentionally write something heavy with bass just the way it came out.
- ◇ Valefar: Me personally? Hmm... It's a tough one. I loved the Abortion of religious futility album, but my heart lies with the raw, old school black metal.

How have the responses on the music been over the years? Were you able to establish some sort of a fan base?

- ◇ Razakel: Over the years we have developed quite a loyal underground following amongst the black metal community, in various countries, and it seems to be ever growing.
- ◇ Valefar: Our local fans show their support at all the gigs in the area, and leave there mark. They are always awesome to play to, really get the blood pumping.

The band pictures show the members with corpse paint and the logo has some of typical satanic 'trademarks'. Why is it important for you to apply to the 'scene code'? How do you feel about bands that have left the days behind in which they painted the faces as well and wore spikes and/or armors? Is it important to keep this facet of the black metal alive?

- ◇ Adramalech: It can all get a bit cliché for me, and distract from the music. I can understand why bands move on and evolve in order to keep things fresh and interesting. They shouldn't be criticised for wanting to try something different.
- ◇ Razakel: For me the image is important! I believe it vital that at least some bands in the black metal community keep such traditions alive.
- ◇ Valefar: To me Corpse paint is equal to war paint, Every time we get on stage it's a war against god, to make our voices heard and to spread the message of Black Metal. When there is that much anger at what the church has done this is the only 'Legal' was to let out aggression at them. It is who we are.
- ◇ Hildisvini: The initial idea behind corpse paint and spikes was to reflect the musical and philosophical differences between black metal and other forms of metal visually, and I think that's a delineation that should be maintained. Black metal is not part of the linear development of metal; although many people think it follows on from death metal as that followed on from thrash and thrash followed on from NWOBHM, but it doesn't. In fact at its extremes (and by that I mean compositional extremes not aesthetic ones - for example Burzum's Filosofem) it often doesn't resemble metal at all. The unique nature of black metal transcends instrumentation and song structure and if you don't recognise that then you don't understand black metal.

In terms of the music, do you have certain preferences when it comes to albums and genres? How has your interest in music changed over the years and has your involvement in a band led to a shift in terms what you like and what not?

- ◇ Adramalech: When I started out, I felt as I was still trying to find my feet when writing the tracks. I'll admit that I rushed some of them, and maybe they were a bit ambitious as we were just starting out. I listen to a wide genre of music, but I'm not going to try and prog rock and black metal. I tend to find that if I'm listening to a genre I'll try and work in a similar style. Take for example, on the next album; there will be a slower more doomy song, which is a reflection to a lot of the slower paced bands I was listening to at the time, i.e. early Katatonia and My dying bride. I don't want to be just another clone band which I think is why we try and vary it up a bit.

Should black metal be technically challenging or should it remain in a somewhat simplistic style of music?

- ◇ Valefar: My music taste has stayed the same for as long as I can remember, I am very heavily influenced by thrash and black metal. I listen to all types of music but i will always end the day with a bit of Nargaroth or Silencer.
- ◇ Hildisvini: My musical preferences are largely reactionary in the sense that if I hear something I like then I like it. That might sound facetious but what it means is that I don't hear something, weigh up the different elements of it and then decide whether it's good or not, I simply hear it and if there's something worth hearing then I'll continue to listen, regardless of genre. I have no guilty pleasures: if I like something then there must be - to my mind - a good reason for that. That is not to say I don't have an affinity for particular genres; obviously I enjoy most forms of metal (unsurprisingly black metal is a particular favourite) but I also enjoy hardcore, post-hardcore, classical music and ambient house, as well as a whole slew of other styles and bands.

Should black metal be technically challenging or should it remain in a somewhat simplistic style of music?

- ◇ Adramalech: I think it can be either, there's no harm in mixing it up a bit. Just do whatever you feel comfortable with; I can think of several good technical bm bands and several more simplistic bm bands. Who's to say which is better? I see technical bm more of an evolution of the genre, just another path for the music to go down and explore.
- ◇ Valefar: Its whatever you want it to be. Keep it diverse, Devastate people with blast beats and tremolo picking or groove it up, get the crowd moving instead, kicking the shit out of each other. Slow it down...fell the cold grip of sorrow or add some death metal and destroy ear drums
- ◇ Hildisvini: Assuming you mean "technically challenging" as instrumentally demanding then I don't think it really matters; the sheer speed of a lot of black metal makes it technically demanding even if it isn't full of banal, widdly guitar solos or jazzy time signatures. What is important is that the composition of the music is technically challenging. If the musicians push themselves when writing the music then the level of technicality is irrelevant unless you're a musical instrument geek.

How do you see the recent trend of depressive and so-called 'post-black metal'? Are you able to listen to such stuff?

- ◇ Adramalech: Yes, but not for a great deal of time as it can be a bit crushing.
- ◇ Hildisvini: Most of it is, frankly, effete crap. There are a few worthwhile bands, but the vast majority of it sounds like it's been made by people who are overly concerned with co-opting black metal technique and imagery to create an aesthetic. Black metal is an expressive form of music, and some of what it expresses is depressing or sorrowful, but to focus on those aspects shows an inherent misunderstanding on what black metal really is: an essentially Romantic movement concerned with revealing inherent truth and uncompromising opposition to ignorance.

How about shows? Did you have had a chance to play live already? How have these experiences been?

- ◇ Adramalech: I've not played live with the new line up, but from I've had mixed experiences playing live, from amps blowing up, low turn outs, broken legs etc. It all a good experience though.
- ◇ Hildisvini: As the newest member I have only played one gig with the band so far. It was far from perfect, but it was as good as can be expected considering the circumstances. I'm sure that as we get used to the new songs and get back into the routine of playing live we will improve.

What releases are available from you or labels? A new one forthcoming?

- ◇ Adramalech: The new album is due to be released in Autumn. We have recorded 4 of the tracks so far and have rough ideas for the tracks that will make up the album. I think this will be a strong album as we have a nice mix of styles, well written songs and a very good producer to work with.
- ◇ Valefar: Abortion of Religious Futility is available from Dark Meadow recordings as well as the new release which is as you put before under lock and key.

How can people get in touch with you?

- ◇ Adramalech: Facebook is your best bet.
- ◇ Valefar: Through Reverbnation, Facebook or Myspace.
- ◇ Hildisvini: If they want to get in touch with the band then they can find us on all of the usual internet-based resources. If they want to get in touch with me personally then they can inquire through the band's resources.

In case you want to add a final comment, then this would be the right spot and time for it:

- ◇ Adramalech: Look out for the new release in autumn

Colossloth – Baalberith – Split (2010)

7 Tracks (MP3 – Dark Meadow Recordings) - _ _ - (40:47)

Colossloth – Show Me My No!

(United Kingdom; Experimental Ambient, Drone, Noise)

1 Track - _ _ - (9:08)

<http://www.myspace.com/colosslothman>

Yes, indeed ... I have some grudge against the band Colossloth. Why? Well, I wanted to buy one of their demos several years ago, but it turned out that it was sold-out soon after the initial releases. Stuff like this can happen you might think, but the total amount of copies was so ridiculously low that I felt cheated either way. Personally, I see no point in spreading music that is kept unnecessary (artificially) limited. Colossloth tried some explanation, but none of them were really convincing. Yes, I can be resentful now and then.

Show Me My No!, this would be the title of the sole track with which this band appears on this split album. It is a rather experimental piece, whose concept consists of several elements as well as certain type of repeating these. For instance, a guitar chord progresses into some 'wild' play of the same, while the background something like a harp (?) appears; something like moving the fingers over the strings and creating a distinct effect; fans of horror movies as well as computer games of the same genre will certainly have noticed it one time or another. It is suppose to give you the idea that an instrument plays, even though no one seems to be around to do so. Furthermore, a vaguely discernable drone/ambient texture lingers around in the back somewhere ...

Those are the core elements and they are repeated, varied and whatnot until the end of the track. It gets a bit tiring now and then ...

Baalberith – For the Glory of Blasphemic Supremacy

(United Kingdom; Black Metal)

6 Tracks - _ _ - (31:39)

<http://www.myspace.com/baalberithUK>, <http://www.reverbnation.com/baalberith666>

Band number two on this split would be the British Baalberith and their music is rather traditional black metal with little compromise to modern influences in terms of the sound and style. The Norwegian Mayhem meet Baltak, this is an impression that you gain while listening to this release; 'Bleed the 5000' would be an example for this. Slightly violent, raw but also with some surprising touches along well-crafted guitar parts. Actually, it is a bit surprising to hear the bass in the background ...

Baalberith play rather old-school black metal with some homage to Venom and Hellhammer. It has solos, but it faces the same issues as the Italian band The True Endless, whose music wanders in the same regions: at times, the music is simply unable to get really started and sounds unnecessarily tedious; Black Metal War and Bleached Bones. As such, this release shows the good and the bad sides of this band. On the one hand, the music can be intense and fascinating, while on the other, the riffs seem to pass by and the listener might long for the end of the track to come.

The Countess Bathory cover is solid and close to Venom's original.

Note:

The release can be downloaded from this site for free:

<http://www.darkmeadowrecordings.com/freesplitseries.htm>

Baalberith – Abortion of Religious Futility (2010)

(United Kingdom; Black Metal)

8 Tracks (CDr – Dark Meadow Recordings) - _ _ _ - (38:35)

<http://www.myspace.com/baalberithUK>, <http://www.reverbnation.com/baalberith666>

Better, this is the first impression that imposes itself on the listener. Better than the album discussed above and much more fascinating. Keyboards make an appearance, the music is more focussed and offers a large array of styles and sounds. Meandering between aggressive and slower midtempo passages, the band takes the listener over a rollercoaster trip from Dark Funeral-influenced music, to fast thrashy ones to death metal-influenced compositions, while doomy segments appear now and then as well. In addition, the vocals also show a surprisingly large variation and are not limited to the typical black metal screams; deep growls were used as well for instance.

Aside from these basic outstretches, the music comes with some nice solo parts now and then and it would be up to these to bring the music up to a higher level; Writhe in the Flesh and Battle for the Blazing Dawn. They do two things: one, they break the monotony of the music, and two, they work as a counterpoint to the vocals. It is somehow sad to see that the band fails to really build-up momentum now and then. Riff and arrangements pass by and leave not much of an impression ... it would be up to the solos to do this. To describe the performance as bad would do an injustice to the band, but while listening to the tracks in the order of appearance, they sound a bit too random and not consistent in the way that the 'idea' – the underlying basis if you like – varies in such an extent that it does not sound convincing. Maybe the band's overall conservative approach makes it difficult to thoroughly enjoy their performance.

Abortion of Religious Futility has some good moments and can be enjoyed easily, but the 'entire' performance leaves a slight bitter taste nonetheless.

The Devil, had he fidelity,
Would be the finest friend –
Because he has ability,
But Devils cannot mend.
Perfidy is the virtue
That would be but resign, –
The Devil so amended.
Were durably divine

By Emily Dickinson

Interview section

Rajam

Hey how are you folks over in Indonesia?

Hell Yeah fucking great.....

When did you start Rajam? Was there a favourite band whose music you wanted to start playing? What was your first metal album you have listened to?

Rajam was formed when I'm on my very boring point to my old band that show no any innovation anymore It's so very hard for me to continue at that time, so real shitty.... Since there we've created our own songs.... For the first time I hear those greatest albums like: Helloween (Keeper of The Seven Keys 1), Sepultura (Arise), Dark Throne (Blaze from the Northern Sky), Rotor (Behind The 8th Ball)

What does the name Rajam refer to? Can you explain it a bit?

RAJAM means an Execution

Can you write a bit about the history of the band? Did you have some line-up changes? Did your music change over the years? Which albums have seen the light of day so far?

formed in 2000, line up: Sir Magus, Dusk & Frostgoat) Line up at Legion Timur: Sir Magus, Rob, Warlord, Coffin 2001 – 2002: Sir Magus, Dark, Coffin And War Begin's Line Up: Sir Magus, Warlord, East Demon, Coffin 2011 Line Up: Sir Magus & Warlord From the first time we've formed we played Black Metal... During the journey of us until now, there's Burning Antartica, song from our deepest heart to express what we feel about Black Metal that didn't played by every single people inside this world, fot that Black Metal played by not so much people....

Why do you play black metal after all? I mean, the music is general cold and dark and in Indonesia the temperatures are rather high and you have a lot of sunshine... so, would power metal not be more appropriate? Then you could sing about how wonderful it is to lay on the beach and enjoy the nice climate. ;)

We have our own culture here, we don't ever use any 666 or Pentagram symbol, because in our place there are so many media for that haunted palaces n something mystis, just like Hallowed places, Keris, Sesajen, Kemenyan, Black Magic, Teluh etc.. And those things are grown up until nowadays here in our country... There are so many bands here that use great cultured philosophies....

Anyway, do some of you have additional side-projects? What would these be?

Sir Warlord has a side project band called Destroy Target... For their daily jobs, mainly those extreme metal musicians work in those common company to feed their musical idealities.....

How would you describe your music? What is the essence of Rajam's art?

RAJAM plays Bestial BM when their first shown up, with those war lyrics, most people call it with War BM.... RAJAM's art just a logo, we just changed that alphabet J in the middle of our artwork (J means JACKAL)

Are you able to record the music in a professional studio? How often do you meet to do some rehearsal sessions?

Yeahhhh, it would be done after all..... We seldom meet each other because of our place separated far away in different cities....

Why does your latest release have the title 'Burning Antarctica'? How does one have to imagine it? Why does the Antarctica have to burn?

All ideas started from the news fact about an ice mountain's pieces n swayed in oceans, all because of a very high level sun beam's increased through the Antarctica (Global Warming), so that inspired us to create song about Antartica named Burning Antarctica... Wild and beastly Aggressive, that's us definitely.... =)

Violent and aggressive, these are too words that come to mind while listening to your latest release. Is this the way you prefer black metal? Music that is a pure aggressive blast, music without much mercy? You hear a lot of Immortal influences in your art.

Warlord is a big fans of Abbath Immortal.....

Fallen Crown is an acoustic and calm composition. Why does it appear on the album? Is there something special you want to express through it?

We placed "Fallen Crown" as the last song in our album as an acoustic composition to closed all Unholy words from the first song and the next other songs....

Ratakan Dengan Tanah is a bonus track on this recording. Was it released before? What was it composed? What does it deal with?

Ratakan dgn Tanah is one from our Demo CD, then we released Solusinya Adalah Perang on 2003, thus we re-recorded all songs and pack it into a Full Length Album.... And War Begin was released by Dark banner prod....

Compared with your earlier releases, what progression did the band take over the years?

Yeah the first album means a continuity of the process for us to make the second album and so on.... Burning Antarctica is a "More Better Album" than And War Begin

How long did it take you to get Burning Antarctica done? Do you have some new songs completed already?

It takes One Year to finished Burning Antartica, because our home separated so far away each other so it also make any matters and a little problem for us. Nowadays we've reach 8 to 9 songs for our next album, so we can find a good label to release our newest album....

Why do you use Indonesian as well as English lyrics? Is there one you prefer?

We used Indonesian language because we are an Indonesian indedd.... For those songs in English, we also hope that our songs would be a little easy for people out there to understand it.... We also proudly want to use our own land's language... Hail MADURA!!!

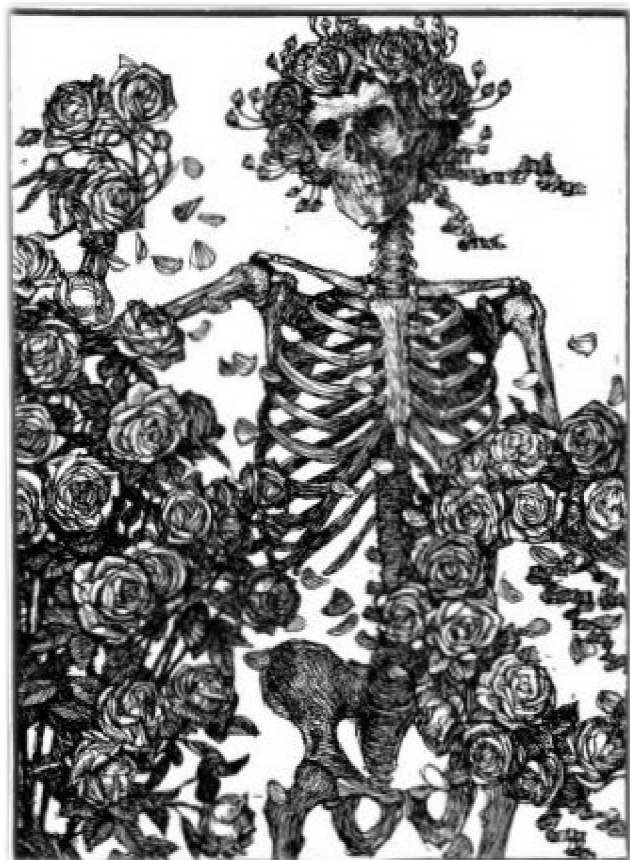
How important is the image for you? Some of the band members use corpse-paint, while others wear gas masks. Does black metal need all these symbols, clothing and style?

For me, Corpse Paint and else are ways to express what we've feel about.... In RAJAM specially, we don't let an ultimatum for our members to used Corpse Paint and any aspects like inverted crosses or pentagram..... We let our members freely use what they want to express.... Yes of course we salute those musicians that wear Corpse Paint..... and please don't ever wear any clown's uniform else where, hahahhahaa.....

Do you have problems with the authorities over your image and the music that you play? What about other bands?

Until this day, there's no any matters between RAJAM with public stuffs and so on those other musicians in Indonesia

Did you have had a chance to play live? Is there some sort of thriving metal scene in your country?



Here in Indonesia there are so many organization and metal scene formed everywhere, and so do that gigs and events. Every month since March, RAJAM has its own Tour Schedule.... Maybe there are less of those infos about us, since in last year BEHEMOTH and MARDUK have come and perform here in our country...

In case someone would be interested in some good bands from Indonesia, which one would you recommend to them. What type of music do they play?

There are so many great bands here in Indonesia: RAJAM, Ritual Orchestra, EMPTYS, Diabolical, Ravenwinter, Siksa Kubur, JASAD, JAGAL, Forgotten, Death Vomit, In Loving Memory etc..

And what about labels from your country? What are the best local mailorders or distros to turn to?

So far, there are many good prod label here like Ludah Prod, Rottrevore, ESP, No Label etc.....

A lot of metal fans have a favourite beverage? What would be yours? Do you have some good booze in Indonesia?

HAhahaha, this is the most lovable question that we like to answer it proudly.... Me myself, specially like Red Wine mixed with Beers.... In Indonesia there are so many liquid drunked drinks like CIU, Cokrek, ARAK, Binaraci etc....

According to your MySpace site you are looking for a band to do a split album with you. Did you have had any luck so far? What music should the other band play to qualify for a split with you?

Yeah, that's correctly right! Actually we have a deal with Spellcraft, but we haven't found any label yet to released it.. Maybe there in your place there are labels that want to try to released our split album, just feel free to contact us and let's have a long talk about it.... =)

How can people reach you?

addres RAJAM
the mighty rajam
jl.mangga 142 - 143 Kesek -
Labang - Bangkalan 69163 Madura -
East Java - Indonesia
www.myspace.com/rajamadura

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Some final words if you like:

be hail and Horne to the mighty A Dead Spot
Of Light.... Cheerz from RAJAMADURA !! Indonesian Bestial war metal.

Barbaros

Hey there ... how are times in Algeria at the moment? Are you and your band-members fine? Who am I addressing?

- ▲ Ayrod: Hey my friend!! Thanks to give the opportunity to say what we are feeling here in Africa!! it's must be spring time here!! But it's too so hot, the sun is very especial, it burn the skins like in the hell hahaa!
- ▼ Nihil: Well....Algeria now!!! A field of anarchy on various domains!!! Social-political and cultural crisis!!! (Identity crisis, repression of political opposition, unemployment....) nothing goes on the right now!!!! We're fighting the life's issues regarding...each member's works hard in his corner!!!

Why don't you write some lines on the history of the band? Why did you start it, how did it develop over the years, why was it a one-man band at a certain time and what is the current status?

- ▲ Ayrod: I remember the first time when I seen ABRANIS on TV, the first Rock Band in North Africa, since the success of this band grow up , the National Television have censored many clips, because they singing only in Kabyle language and they have so modern dress and looks like Européen and sometimes with sexy dancers from France "Les Claudettes"....!! I started hear Metal with Metallica in 1993 "Black Album" the Tape was imported from Tunisia in pirate copies !!so many bands like Nirvana, Pantera, Iron Maiden-"the number of the beast" the original tapes come from Spain by father of friend....in 1997 I discovered Metal Explosion French magazine comes with a compilation V5 (with bands like Sword master, Misanthrope, Marduk...etc) and read the different interviews and reviews...etc I have been shocked cause I have never heard sounds like that before and I have really interested in the extreme Metal !! big guitar distortion, grim vocals...very special feeling!! it's fuckin amazing music !!! we want to looks like black Metal bands!! Because we love these band and we became fan of Mayhem, Darkthrone...forever!!we are honored to play Black Metal cause represent for us like a revolution, we want to be free and strong against the intolerant society! We should spread the underground music over the third word and religious countries!! the internet started in 1998/99 in Algeria! then google go search the Hell!!! today 2011 we give an interview to "a Dead Spot of light"!

Many break up and changes in the Barbaros line-up, because it's not easy to play music in the third world countries, and play black Metal is so dangerous for us! I hope that current line-up stay for long time as possible.

- ▼ Nihil: The band start on 1998 by Emperor Ayrod on guitar (study at the moment), while other members reactive in other domain of live (Nihil on Bass was in Tizi ouzou – (playing hard rock and grung with some local bands !!! – Panzer on vocals, Morbid on lead guitar too young at the moment!!!! Smuk on drum living in Hassi Messaoud). Actually the current line-up's fixed at 05 members and 01 member of sessions (Salem on keyboard)



Who is currently involved in the band and what would the musical background of the members be? Aside from Emperor Ayrod no one seems to have been – or is – active another musical project, or? In case of Emperor Ayrod, what were these and what kinds of music was played by these?

- ▲ Ayrod: me the Emperor on rhythm guitar, Painzer on Vocals, Morbid on Lead guitar, Nihil on Bass, Smuk on Drum. I have also been on Satanachia-rip (black Metal) , Samhan-rip (Heavy doom Black), Bactotavaiy-rip (Black Metal), Agor-rip (Black Doom), Azar-standby (some tracks not mixed yet – Dark folk and epic metal later)
The actual line-up is involved with 100% in Barbaros, and they give all the best of them self to win the battles or die! .
- ▼ Nihil: doom metal – Black metal –Folk Metal - some symphonic and prog metal ---- Berber music (source of deep influences) some ethnic and tribal sound on the world – Reggae...etc. I was played with some local band in Tizi ousou since 1998) actually bass player from AXXIL (heavy metal/Stoner band from Algiers). I was joined BARBAROS on 2009 as Bass player. Morbid was playing bass /backing vocal with Djamharouche « Black metal oriental-split up now) he worked too about other projet with me Nihil , named PROFANAS « brutal black metal » split up just when Morbid joind Barbaros as lead guitare player. Smook is influenced by Death metal on all it(s forms) power/prog metal / technical metal. Painzer is so into True Black Metal...etc.

Barbaros, what does this name refer to? Why was it chosen back then and what is it suppose to express?

- ▲ Ayrod: The ancients Greeks call BARBAROS to any foreigner without civilisation and who don't talk a known language! Like people from North Africa for example!! Nowadays in the encyclopaedia, applied also to call the European and Asiatic invaders and used to motioned the cruelty and brutality...etc
These barbarians have not rules or civilisation, they walk on this earth without fear, they break the entire border, they want lives free every where and death is nothing, we want praise these brave people, today, that what we need like model of courage and strength to confront the hypocrisy and the enemy of freedom.

Your logo looks quite peculiar and has some amount of symbolism in it. Parts of it can also be found in the one of Emperor Ayrod's side-project Samhan. What would be the meaning behind it?

- ▲ Ayrod: This is our new Barbaros logo is illustrated by the greatest Lord of Logo "Christophe Szpajdel" he drawn many logos like Emperor, Enthroned, Horna, Kult ov Azazel...etc. so you can find the Berber sign and their cross. it's very important for us to show the identity of this old symbols of Freedom and honour! and many Berber women make it by tattoo. now days this beautifull practices is totally disappeared cause is forbidden by religion! by the occasion I am looking tattoo shop to make lot of Berber sign over my body ;)
- ▼ Nihil: The sign is the symbole of TAMAZIGHT appurtenance, cultures and land... it is a sign of protest and significant « Z of letter Berber language TIFINAGH »

The first release of your band was actually a split album with the Algerian band The Kult ov Satanâchiïa. How did this happen? Can you write a bit about this band? Are they still around?

- ▲ Ayrod: Satanachia is the first Black Metal band in north Africa, and I was the co-founder with Lord Igret, the first demo called Barbaros 1999!! Some songs was re-mastred and used in the first Barbaros demo 2001 after the split-up of Satanachia, Lord Igret was comeback to release new demo and gigs under the banner of "The Kult ov Satanâchiïa", I am in contact with Igret and sometimes we take some beer in the area!! So he stay active may be new album with new line-up soon!!

What does your music deal with? How does the cultural history of the Berber play into this? Why is this aspect so important to you?

- ▲ Ayrod: we have not reinvented black Metal, what we try to give with our music the same feeling when we listen to the songs of Mayhem or Darkthrone...we want to be like these Metal band in Europe, free and strong against all form of repression, may be it's not easy to do it here (to not say is dangerous for us) but we fight with all what we have of forces, black Metal propaganda rules. we want not stopped now...never!! no much History of the Berber in our concept, cause they don't really existed or the Berber civilisation never existed!! And the latest fascinate discover of the Scientist it's very important cause they found the same DNA family in the Pyramids people of North Egypt when compared with the Berber of north Africa!!!! now should I say that Amon is the Berber god of Egypt???? Barbaros is our History and we have right to imagined it like we want....something like Starwars hahahaaaaa!!!
- ▼ Nihil: As members of BARBAROS belong to Berbers origins (4/5), we claim our roots and our culture suppressed since long time generation after generation, now it's clear our identity and our culture as our Lifestyle must been considerate firstly, we communicate Tamazight we reason like this as our blood flows in our veins on Berber direction, and we never accept other foreign lifestyles (Arabic or others.. !!!) Apart the ours.

Is this a topic that receives a broader audience in your country or is it rather suppressed and kept at a low level?

- ▲ Ayrod: At this moment no one gives a real important of what we did!! Many people says that we are crazy we are all only not like a musicians!! These opinions reassure me somewhere hahaa!!! other side the public are more oriented to what the media show them everyday!! so we don't care for them hahaa!! Of course the major venues have been refused every request from us!! When the government owns all, you will have nothing or just little shit hahaaaaaaa!



▼ Nihil: it 's more and more that be a subject of wide public or tribal conflict as we approach I would say it's a fate of a nation completely repressed by a state power, fate of people that trying to annihilating its principles, foundations and its identity !!!! It's a question of actuality!!!

When it comes to art, does this aspect receive some recognition? Are there other bands or artists that are able or willing to deal with this topic?

- ▼ Nihil: in my knowledge, this type of art (extreme metal in all its forms) is not tolerated by most people, here in Algeria, except a small public between neophytes and Connoisseurs, otherwise I would say that currently there is no group or artist who makes music with engaging lyrics, with the exception of a minority of older artists Kabylie of course I will mention firstly (Matoub Lounes- murdered in 1998, Slimen Azem - died in 1981, Ferhat Imazighen Imula, Malika Domrane Amazigh Kateb (Gnawa Diffusion former))

In terms of Samhan, why did you choose Satanism as a concept for your band? Do you try to express your protest towards your own socio-cultural environment or was it done rather because in black metal a certain cliché has to be applied to?

- ▲ Ayrod: Samhan means full moon in Kabyle language and there is much ancestral ritual taken under the Full moon, so I think the ancient Berber use many believes in dark force in nature! So called today Satanism by some part of these adepts. For me Black Metal could be also the dark force of the hymns and music!

Judging from the perspective of musical interests and preferences, how did it evolve over the years? Where did you start and where are you now? Have there been certain releases that accompanied you all these years?

- ▲ Ayrod: we have started younger in this music, when I see more than 10 years back, we stay always young hahaaaaa!! I think we need to be more mature to say some thing about what we did! We need many years of work and perseverance!! And without meeting International Bands and peoples outside of our area would be very difficult for us to give an estimation of our level!!! I would say that we have not defeated the enemy yet hahaaaaaaa!!
- ▼ Nihil: we listened to classic rock, hard rock and heavy metal, We grew up listening to all kinds over the year it is increasingly developed through Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath in 80-90 Metallica Venom and Bathory middle 90 up , Mayhem, Morbid Angel and Emperor since 94-95, all in listening to other genres (Reggae, Jazz, Country, Kabyle music, folk, etc)
We enjoyed (liked) the extreme metal overlooked the biggest type of sound (Guitares , drums and keyboards plyed with high level , also guttural voices .. !!! (black – Heavy – death) and we liked at the same time this music overlooked it's lyrics and movement against all that symbolise conformism, .. Aristocracy..etc.

The music is not pure black metal. Some riffs and arrangements have a rather folky touch. Is this something you would like to explore on a larger degree, or will this facet remain on a small scale?

- ▼ Nihil: Music Barbaros is a black metal brutal and melodic at the same time, we Composed a black folk epic with medieval flavour in the past , we seen going to use all our influences in terms of atmospheric folkloric and even if it's a black metal evil and misanthropic in background

While preparing the questions I listened to the first output that I bought from you several years ago: My blood for...Tamazgha. Tell us a bit about this release. What is the background, how long did it take you to record/compose it and why does it have this strange sound?

- ▲ Ayrod: this demo released by French label Eisiger-Mond Production in 2006, I talk about the Barbarians of the times, and how they want gives they blood to liberate their land...it's huge battle between demons and Modern Human!! The old and the new....etc
in same time it's weird and controversial, I have used modern music instrument hahaha!! The strange sound of guitars; is the mixture of more than 5 guitars + bass guitar with distortion synthesizer!! I should have especial moment to write music and it's taking a long time and to record it's other part of times with own too poor material so....!

On the cover artwork two different kinds of writings can be found: English and something else ... what would this be?

- ▲ Ayrod: Yeah it's Berber letter Tifinagh and sometimes I write with Latin letter to express with Kabyle Mother tong language (Tamazgha constituted the collective of different Berber Nations like Kabylie, Chawi, Chleuh, Chanwiyen, Mazigh, Mozabit, Sawra, tewareg...etc)

Why did you choose to take the two cover versions: To the Memory of the Dark Countess (Mutilation cover) and Transilvanian Hunger (Darkthrone cover). Do these tracks have a special meaning to you?

- ▲ Ayrod: Yeah of course!! may be the concept of the Demo "My blood for...Tamazgha" have nothing to do with the songs of Mutilation, but the title of "To the Memory of the dark Countess" has seduced me so much!! That remember me the Berber Queen Damya (or Kahina that mean the sorcery) so we can imagine the dark history of our old mothers....!! and Darkthrone is our the principal influences in our music, and we like so much to cover the great band like that!!

Three years after these release the Godoff one has seen the light of day. It is much rawer and more in a Darkthrone-like fashion. Is this the music you would like to continue to play or was it merely a step to show the band's potential?

- ▲ Ayrod: in this demo "Godoff" we want give something Brutal and melodic with Darkthrone like major influence of course, Morbid, Nihil and slave ex-Barbaros, were imported many modification in the band composition. And to talk about perfection is so late or so far!!!!
- ▼ Nihil: Barbaros is not limited on Darkthrone touch on Godoff (there're a lot of hymns and melodies that we tried to give to our music in order to make one kind of black metal

...mélodique and brutal at the same.. !!! and now we're working hardely to leading a brutal black metal , technical and melodically at the same time !! may be using some atmospheric and samples

What does the title actually refer to?

- ▲ Ayrod: it's very dangerous for me to say it what does mean hahaaaaaaa!! You know, today the big fear of humanity is that God don't exist !!! I know I don't care about Atheist or the Agnostic (whose will be happy to hear this hahahaaaa).but this demo it's like a controversy like in the title track 5, Sun, gods of fire....any body believe in sun to day hahaaa!!!

Have you been able to reach out to some label to release it in a broader manner? When I recall it correctly, then you sent me a CDr promo thing back then.

- ▲ Ayrod: Special package of "Godoff" CDs+ T-shirt can buy it soon in July 2011 on our new label "Psycho Originals" from USA www.psychooriginals.com, but totally re-mastered with new Drums remix! And new voices with Painzer (vocalist of Barbaros)

Amalu N' Zik is your debut album (?), but this was also the title of a never released split with Taddard, so I am but of confused. Can you clear matters up?

- ▲ Ayrod: Yeah, Amalu n'Zik is totally re-mixed and released in three labels, Tape A with Thorn laceration records (UK) and Cd-r DVD box with Svartgalgh Records (Netherlands), CD's Satanica records (New Zealand). And so called split with Taddart, never released just few promo copies.

In style it sounds like a bit more professional version of the "My blood for...Tamazgha" output; if you compare the tracks and their sound. Did you re-record them or merely re-mastered the old versions? Are those other tracks new ones or are these also some earlier tracks that have not been released earlier?

- ▲ Ayrod: I was used the same old tracks of guitars and make a new distortion effect, but only tow tracks of "My blood for.." and "...Tamazgha", for other tracks I have added synthesiser distortion to old guitars records, so the result it's not so bad I think!!



I guess Mayhem and Burzum are two further bands that had an impact on you and you wanted to pay homage to, right?

- ▼ Nihil: not quite, because it's true that these two leaders « Mayhem – Burzum » of this type are seen as pioneers, but we love the black for the black in our way , it's our armour but before all that 's our war song and hymn.

What is the 'Adrar n Vaya' movie? The intro to your latest output was taken from it.

- ▲ Ayrod: From a legend Kabyle "Adrar n Vaya" (Vaya Mountain) is one of the greatest achievements of the deceased Azzedine Meddour, director of the film in 1997. I just wanted to make a tribute to the Kabyle and show the identity of the project, it's very important for to say:" hey we proud to be Kabyle and support Black metal!!!"

What about the compositions of your very early releases? Is there any chance to hear them re-released or re-interpreted or re-recorded at some point in the future?

- ▼ Nihil: As we have composed a few titles among others we had too wrote new lyrics, without having finished them by instruments working because we must play them before ...and there the problem is "non-availability of the drum" after long time of local searching!!!!....

The Metal Archives lists two releases that never made it into a physical existence: Amalu N' Zik / The Day Of Honour (Barbaros / Taddart split), Azro, Udem, Kartaj (Best-of release) Why did this happen and is there a chance to see them appear in the future at some point?

- ▲ Ayrod: the French Label Occultum records-rip, announced that will soon release that split and best of, but nothing it's done, just few promo copies turned...I think it's too late to make an Best-of release is a worst of time, I think it's more important to working in new composition of music!

Emperor Ayrod, what about your label Dark Arts? Is it still active? In case it isn't, why did you shut it down or put on hiatus?

- ▲ Ayrod: Yeah, I am also in Dark Arts Prods <http://myspace.com/darkartsprods> , the latest release is DARKSPLIT Volume2, is about 3 way split band, (Tenebrum, Azar, Unnazillat), and soon I will release volume 3 also with many band split come in Pro sleeve jacket pro Cd-! AJRIS new chawi black Metal band!

Is or was it easy to reach out to audiences outside of Algeria? How were your releases been received?

- ▲ Ayrod: As you know, we are Kabyle and our Nation is not recognised yet, we have only the Arabic paper with Algerian citizenship and the Visa deliverance don't exist for the people from these areas, because the immigration law is so severe, we have been considered like big risk of immigration and terrorism. Just little response from the world, because the most people can not believe in that Black Metal band from Muslim countries...can not be true (Satanic, Blasphemy...etc)

Would you mind describing the metal scene – if it is possible to describe it as such – in Algeria? How do you get in touch with other bands? Are there local events and concerts you can attain?

- ▼ Nihil: the metal scene in Algeria: poor scène virtually non existent, after a Desists ministry of culture and communication since 2006 : spaces spectacle and shows are prohibited to youth groups (those can be counted on the fingertips)... so in general shows and events are very rare (occasionally) and funded by equity and money of groups active in the metal scene (we invest our money for organizing some shows !!!)
However, the positive point is the existance of some bands who have really potential on this work and can give something nice to the metal fans ...some bands like DEVAST (Technical death metal) , String Horror (Deathcore), HELLIUM (death /metalcore)and ORCUS (Sympho black)and a nother ones ... !!!!

How did it develop over the years and what is the main focus of the genres?

- ▲ Ayrod: as my brother Nihil said, the Metal scene don't exist in these area, very small young band no longer exist!!

Out of curiosity, what is the role of women in the metal scene? Are they able to play a role at all?

- ▲ Ayrod: what!!! I have nothing to say on politics hahaaa!! so please let me talk about women in general or over the world!! okay!! I was hoping so much if Darkthrone were women band, I will certainly fall in love with one of these hahahaaaaaaa!!
I think the women should be more and more implicated in Metal and Music, cause they have very special feeling and thinking about the arts!! I fall on my ass the first time when I see on youtube "Darkened nocturn slaughtercult" hahaaa!! And many greatest examples from Europe scenes...etc
- ▼ Nihil: talking about women in the metal scene in Algeria, I would say that there is a sizeable number of girls who love this style of music and attending performances at every opportunity had been present, sometimes their presence is a bit shy ... it s explains the fact that there is too much violence and sometimes overruns (big words, and vulgar words of some guys!!!)
But despite that, the girl still plays an important role in metal scene (either she's participating in a group as a singer, musician ... or she's here'in the public with nice look « Gothic – New rock – leather cloth or mangate look) A great effort is provided by her to supporting us (Thank's girl!!!! ayyaaaaay !!!) ..

Let us venture out of the musical realm a bit. For us in the West the developments in the Maghreb as well as in the Middle East in general are somewhat fascinating, because they seem to coin into a long held demand: a democratic development in the Islamic/Muslim states. What is your opinion on it? How is Algeria affected by this and do you think that there is a real prospect for change?

- ▼ Nihil: absolutely, Algeria being a country that is a vibrant market for the occidetale products following the evolution of the Internet and its communication channels (TV channels, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc.) I would say this will help and develop the musical approach enormously and we'll contribute to consume the musical fashion in few minutes of theirs outputs (last products), now, we haven't cultural obstacles whatever the origins or belonging of people (maghrebs or Middle Eastern ones) .. everyone's free to follow with he want ...musical and cultural tendencies are all respected, insofar as there's no overshoot in depend the freedom of others!!!!

However, the disadvantages existent are that the state provides colossal efforts to freezing the musical activity specifically the extreme metal!!!! For unknown reasons at the moment!!!!

Can art be used to support these popular movements? Can you name examples from your own country or local community?

- ▼ Nihil: whenever a symbol of opposition or popular expression appears on the scene of the protest song, or hes Exiled devalued about his copyrights status for art , or he' s murdered in unknown circumstances....., for that i can speak about MATOUB LOUNES, was one an undeniable symbol of Berber Revolution against power-state and claiming Berber uniting ...he's killed on juin 1998, and the state had closed up his file after that, there're too : SLIMAN AZEMexiled to French after independence 1970....and dead in 1981,LOUNIS AIT MENGUELLETTE (one of the most Kabyle singer since 1975) FERHAT IMAZIGHEN ...Singer and writer deeply involved in political song !!! Since 1974 ..., The ABRANIS (classic rock band from Kabylia)very influenced Led Zeppelin and Beatles !!! Since 1972....., MALIKA DOMRANE ...(woman singer)...MADJID SOULA...1976.....AIT MESLAYEN (dead in 2003) and there're too much ones..

Can we expect something new from you soon? Do you have some plans about releasing a new output?

- ▼ Nihil: we hope realise a tour in other countries TUNISIA, MORROCO, Europe and USA.....)

Do you have some release currently available?

Ayrod: We will soon go to take a new recording full length album with new titles, so keep an eye on <http://myspace.com/truebarbaros>

How can people contact you? In case a band would be interested in doing a split with you, what are the requirements for this? Do you have certain preferences in terms of the style and such?

- ▲ Ayrod: We will pleased to split with any underground band, of course in Black Metal style, we haven't requirements, may be only one: we don't need do split with any Arabic band! I am sorry for these! Because they caused many problem for our Identity and false allegation!! So please don't make allusion with these bands!!

Some final comments if you like?

- ▲ Ayrod: Thanks very much for your interesting in fukin African black Metal band like Barbaros, it's rarely that people from the world ask about our situation, sorry for the bad English, thanks very much to supporting our causes, stay true and keep the flames of Underground burn \m/.
- ▼ Nihil: We're so happy to give the answers the GERMAN magazine,..... is an opportune time for us we hope to find the necessary resources needed to advance (Studio, shows , support , spectacles, label ...) because in reality a strong desire to exploding exists within us, we like extreme metal and we like do it with professional versions....finally all our thanks to the German magazine « a Dead Spot of Light » for giving us all the Light....thanks a Lot!

Depthfrost

How are you? Have you 'recovered' from the end of the band Depthfrost?

I'm good, thanks.

Well, it's a pity to throw away something that we've given so much. But life goes on.

It came quite as a surprise to see the band depart. What were the reasons for this?

Couple of months after the release of Depthfrost we lost our rehearsal place and started to look for a new one. We also talked about a new album, for which Decayer had a couple of good ideas. I managed to write 4 songs.

Time passed and at some point we felt that we're lacking inspiration. Still no rehearsal places at sight.

And soon we decided to put the band on hold 'till we find a new rehearsal place and get some more inspiration. During this time I forced myself to make something new, but all I had was about 50 shitty ideas.

And sadly, the final nail to the coffin was when Decayer suddenly departed from this world. I then decided that this band cannot continue anymore.

Any chance to see it resurrected or do you want to move on?

Not likely. The band was Havock and Decayer.

Who were the band members and how was the band started? Did and do have the members some additional projects they are or were involved in?

The actual founding members were me(Havock) and Decayer. In 2007 we both were working in the same place and one day we noticed that we have common likeness in music. Decayer then bought electronic drumkit for practise use and I started to play guitar again... after that we decided to record a humourous version of Metallica's song One(based on the fan-made youtube.com shred-version). The final result was not One at all, but an instrumental black metallish heavy metal-song, that we called Rehearsal Song.

One night I got so inspired by the Mayhem's De Mysteriis Dom Sathanas, that I wrote most of the song Betrayed(that one track in Depthfrost-album). Decayer liked it very much and so we decided to give our music a name, which turned out to be named 'Depthfrost'.

At some point there were some people that were interested in joining the band, but none actually joined in the end. They had various reasons(sometimes they were too busy, etc.). So the band was always two-headed.

We planned to record some music influenced by the Swedish death metal-scene. Project's name was Doomgravel, that was changed to Gravel Doom in 2010. I wrote two pieces for that project, but we never actually finished them up. Some kind of demo versions can be listened at www.myspace.com/havock666.



You have released only one album and it has the title 'Depthfrost'. According to the Metal Archives it was three years in the making (2007-2010), so could you write about it. What were the intentions behind it and what kind of music did you play on it?

Originally we didn't have intentions of putting our songs into a form of an album. We thought that we just record the songs, mix them ourselves and then just leave them be or maybe release them in Myspace.

Then we were urged to find a rehearsal place, cause Decayer's neighbors didn't enjoy his blastbeats!

We found a great rehearsal place and then the hunger grew... at this time we decided to re-record some of the material and mold the mess into an album. Instead of mixing it ourselves we asked a help from a pro-mixer(Panzer).

However, we decided not to go too pro and make the covers and burn the cds ourselves.

In hindsight I think that some of the album's songs are somewhat unfinished. The vocals were recorded in various places so they sound so incomplete. But, maybe it's best to leave them unfinished rather than 'polishing' them too much... And possibly I'm never satisfied to the result in the end, whatever that is.

Why does this icy form of black metal have such a fascination for you? Were you inspired by certain band/albums?

The coldness possibly comes from the cynical point of view to the life itself. And the music that we listen(ed was and) is also a great influence.

I take influence from all kinds of music, whereas Decayer was mainly influenced by black metal bands, like Darkthrone, Tsjuder and Watain.

Did you always wanted to play this particular type of music or did you preferences evolve in this direction?

We both always wanted to play Black metal ever since we were introduced to it.

In terms of the lyrics what topics do you deal with?

I like to take themes from dark aspects of history and from horror movies. Infernal topics were more of Decayer's business.

Actually, it is a bit of surprising that neither the band logo not the cover artwork contains some sort of black metal symbolism or scene code. Why this reluctance?

We felt that the satanic imagerery is rather used and kinda boring these days, so we decided not to use them at all.

I was also not able to find a band picture. You try to keep it mysterious, ey?

Aye, we never wanted much publicity.

Do you prefer such rather old-school black metal over the modern trends; like depressive black metal and the so-called post-blackmetal branch?

I like it fast, raw and violent. Also melancholy is mandatory in music I listen, but not in terms of self pity(I know I'm almost quoting Günther Theys of Ancient Rites here). So I prefer more old-school-types.

I don't like very much of these modern high-polished-sound-types of black metal (or metal in general). They usually lack the intensity and sound. I think that today there is too much technology involved in music.

Who is Panzer, who supposedly mixed it? He was not an actual member of the band or?

He was a friend of Decayer and he likes to keep his true identity hidden. He made extremely good job, though!

A good beverage from Finland?

Beer? Finland's offerings on that field of expertise are quite shit, I'm affraid. I seriously cannot recommend any. I prefer German and Irish beer myself, like Krombacher and Guinness.

Name five albums that have had an influence to you and to which you like to return to now and then.

1. Mercyful Fate – Don't Break the Oath
2. Gorgoroth – Destroyer
3. Deströyer 666 – Cold Steel... for an Iron Age
4. Sepultura – Schizophrenia
5. Manowar – Triumph of Steel

1. The ultimate evil lives in Mercyful Fate's Don't Break the Oath! King Diamond's satanic howling along the screaming guitars is so damn haunting.

2. Not one black metal release can compete with the violence and rawness of Gorgoroth's Destroyer. It's a brilliant masterpiece that rips everything apart! At first I didn't like this album at all, but seemed to evolve like some albums do. Eventually it evolved to be one of the best albums ever.

3. Mixture of thrash, black and heavy metal, but not too hybrid. I usually don't enjoy extensive mixtures of metal, but this piece includes some of the greatest riffs of all time. With that attitude and great sounding instruments it delivers, and is maybe the best album of 2000's thus far.

4. One of my first metal albums ever. This album is so heavy that it sounds almost like death metal.

5. What's this? A pure heavy metal release in my top-5? Hell yes! Manowar is one of the best bands too.

What will come after Depthfrost? Do you have some new plans already? Do you still have some older compositions left that wait to be recorded as well as released?

Yeah. I got five songs that I plan to record and release at some point. One of those is a "leftover" from Depthfrost(didn't fit with the rest of the album's songs), a song called Blood Eagle, whose demo version can be heard in Depthfrost myspace.

I don't know if the new songs going to be released under the name Depthfrost, but time will show.

Is your album still available, in case someone would be interested in it? In case it is, how can people acquire a copy of it?

Yeah, it's still available. Few copies are remaining.

And ... some final words ...

I'd like to thank all the great people anyhow involved with this band. Especially thanks to you oneyoudontknow!

And.. greatest hails and thanks to Decayer(R.I.P.) for the great years of black metal madness! I hope you're happy, where ever you are!

Diablery

Hello there ... how are you folks in Greece?

Hello my friend, things in Greece are kinda difficult because of the financial crisis but a desire for music and art in general overcomes everything in the end. I am sure that all of you got the same feeling, too.

Can you introduce the band a bit? What are its members and what kind of music do you play? Why did you pick this name? Who designed your logo and is there a special meaning behind its composition?

The band is named Diablery, was created in 2008 in a city of Greece, Chalkida and we play sympho black metal from the very beginning. The members are: Setesh (Vocals), Nimerius (Guitar), IakChaos (Guitar), Arkhus (Bass Guitar), Nazfell (Synths) and Revan (Drums).

The philosophy of the group is associated with the idea of anti-christianity and in general the refusal of any kind of organized intellectual/political/religious currents that aim to "enslave" Man in various ways. Same time we are focusing to the potential "deification" of Man by cultivating spirituality thus "liberating" the soul from the adherence with the material realm. That doesn't mean that we completely devalue some higher power that may exist.

The name Diablery is a synonym for devilry in some occasions and for us it stands as a Communion (in many ways) with the essence of Lucifer. The logo is designed by Nimerius and it "follows" the vibe that we want to evoke.



What were the reasons for playing this rather modern type of black metal? It seems natural to ask you further what bands influenced you and whose music you try to pay 'tribute' to?

First of all I wouldn't call symphonic BM a modern type of black metal at all, considering many huge bands or projects that have walked this "path" of music a decade ago or more. However it is true that during the last years we witnessed an outbreak of the symphonic element in extreme music (an outbreak more in quantity than quality..). Synths, orchestras and choirs create diversity and a "limitless" feeling

when used in extreme music and we are obsessed with such things!

As musicians we are influenced by the whole Norwegian scene as well as the bands of the Hellenic and Austrian scene. We also feel very influenced by many other genres that are not "black metal" at all -could be romanticism, death metal or folk acoustic stuff. We pay tribute to none yet we have deep respect to those that make the music we love and we thank them for doing so.

Following the quite prominent/rich history of Greek black metal, how would you place your own band in it? What branch do you follow? What are the 'local archetypes'?

Certainly it is difficult for a band in Greece not to step on "Rotting Christ territory" more or less and we are always aim in having a unique sound and not being cypcats of RC or Necromantia. Basically we don't follow any branch (intentionally at least) and concerning the local archetypes, I must say that the majority tends to sound "typical Norwegian" or "weak" but lately I've noticed some diamonds in the scene and I am definitely proud to be a part of it..

Who founded the band and when did all the other members join?

The founder of the band is Nimerius. As for the other members: Revan is in the band 2 years now and all the other members (Setesh, Nazfell, IakChaos and Arkhus) have joined in the last year more or less.

Does anyone of you have some side-projects or is Diablery the main focus for all right now?

The only member that I know of that has a side-project in the strict sense is Setesh. The project's name is Adyton. Exarsis, Reclaim and ArchDaeva share some members with Diablery so we relate with these bands also. Nevertheless Diablery remains a main focus..

The band picture does not really follow the old black metal cliché. Why don't you use corpse paint and such? Why don't you want to look like axe-wielding maniacs?

We took a photo once with the old line-up! Nothing serious really.. we tend to use something of a corpse-paint stuff with the new line-up. For us it is all about bringing a different side of ourselves on the surface and at the moment corpse paint and some "materials" we use onstage provides this transition..

What are the core essences of your music? How has it shifted over time and where to do you like to progress with it? Do you have some sort of definite sound or idea in the back of the head?

One core aspect of our music is this grandiose atmosphere. It always shifts and gets new forms in compositions and we would like to progress in more bizarre yet vast sounding parts. We tend to create very different themes from song to song and we usually 'travel' far away from the original idea, so I'd say there is not really a 'definite sound' approach.

How long did it take you to get "The Catharsis" done? Was it an easy task for you or was it quite a challenge to complete it – the name would suggest as much? Do you still have some ideas from this time over and will those be re-used for a later album?

"The Catharsis" took us a two-week job to be done. We are DIY guys so we decided to produce it ourselves but unfortunately, we were in a hurry to get it done and didn't get to the point we intended 100%. Nevertheless we've learned so much from the whole procedure while it was recorded, mixed, mastered in Setesh's home studio with him as producer. Orchestrations and vocal lines were changed for example and this whole damn thing changed us as musicians (and listeners) to a certain point. The layout was done by Nimerius following the same DIY principal also. That procedure was a "catharsis" for the band indeed. We plan to stick with this DIY approach for the later releases. Some ideas and even whole songs will be used in our debut album that's for sure.

The name of the release dates back to the Aristotelian philosophy. Why did you pick this name in particular and do you read the old Greek philosophers? In case you do, are you able to take some knowledge and/or wisdom out of their writings? Should the writings of Homer for instance receive more attention in the metal scene?

We choose this name because it deals with this whole "Cleansing process" that the ancients were so passionate about (a most beloved theme of conversation among us) and at the same time it honors our native tongue and culture.

There is much to be gained from reading the works of ancient Greek philosophers and we try to acquire this knowledge but we try even more to act based on this wisdom and I think this has even greater importance than just reading some words. Homer's work definitely has to receive more attention. He just has an incredible capacity to create epic scenery combined with mystical elements - a definite "must" for the metal scene I think..

Does the band have some leaders who are responsible for the song-writing or is everything something like a 'community'-process? What about personal musical preferences? How do you deal with these and how are they balanced out?

The compositions on the EP were almost solely done by Nimerius and Setesh made some overall arrangements and got some riffs to spice things up. This fact has changed nowadays and the whole process is a collective effort with each member contributing by giving whole lot more in every level. Each member listens to different music but we are constantly having in mind our musical "goal" as Diablery. That is the real balancing force..

You uploaded your first output on Jamendo. Why did you pick this platform and how do you see the tendency to download music in general? Has the Internet led to a shift in paradigm and heralded a new era in the way of distributing music?

This platform is famous for allowing artists share their music with the world so why don't give it a shot? And it turned out well as it seems. We received feedback from places all over the world after all. Internet has changed our life that is a fact. One has to deal with it. Period. Of course the tendency to download music and the easiness of the procedure kills the atmosphere around music and in the end, the huge amount of releases one can download with a fucking click will kill music itself cause this person won't simply have the time to listen to all that shit he was downloading all this time. A new era indeed!

It is just a choice, though. Support the artists you really like (by purchasing the real thing and go to their concerts) and try to do the least 'harm' to the rest while remaining 'updated' with the world of music..

Do you prefer to stay independent or are you looking for a label?

We are looking for a label that we can work together with and have some really great output. From the very beginning we were determined about that. But until the time when this opportunity of a label shows up we will 'enjoy' our independence, be sure about that..

What about live experiences? Your MySpace site gives some indication on this. How many gigs have you played since and can you write about the responses that you have gotten.

I think we have played about a dozen (or some more) shows with Diablery in our country this year (2010-early 2011). As for the response we get, I can say that the crowd either fucking loves the show or even hate it sometimes from what I hear or others tell me. From the stage perspective I can see people stare in awe, laugh at us or just having some good time. Consider that we tend to provoke when onstage, this variation in response is really a healthy state. There is no pretend from both sides, you know what I mean..

Are the concerts well visited? Do you see some effect of the economical meltdown and the recession that has Europe in its grip in the last few years?

The truth is that as time passes and we are moving deeper into the recession the crowd starts to lessen in numbers. Only big bands really make the difference and can fill a venue. The crowd in Greece is certainly fucking nuts also, which is always a good thing in such times. Good music is always supported in a live stage I think, even in deep economic recession.

What about cover versions? Do you play them on stage and which tracks do you pick and for what reason?

Covers always had a place in our shows (this is going to change after the release of our debut though). We have played many different covers on stage but Arcturus – Fall of man, Satyricon – Mother North and Dimmu Borgir – Spellbound is the covers we like the most. We always covered songs not only just for pure enjoyment but also in order to challenge ourselves as a band and evolve as musicians. We have also played Mayhem, Moonspell and other Satyricon and Dimmu Borgir covers on stage.

Greece is a country that is not very well portrait in the German media in recent years. How is the situation on the ground over there? Are there glimpses of a recovery in sight?

The situation is definitely a bad one. The corruption is just beginning to unfold I think. It is a time of uncertainty, some kind of downfall and a great opportunity for a man or a nation to reconsider his choices. A recovery is only achievable through a total change in the course of our actions. And extreme problems are solved by extreme actions..

Do you have some new music ready and what can we expect from you the future?

As I've implied earlier, we have a debut album composed and plan to release it during the end of 2011, if all things go as we scheduled. You can expect a change in our musical style as it was at the time of the EP release and of course and decent effort with a DIY philosophy. It is time for Diablery to evolve..

How can folks get in touch with you and what are best placed to acquire your release?

You can find us and contact us via our website: www.diablery.tk. Another way is to find us on Facebook. Google it! We are "spreading" our EP with the hand-to-hand method. Upon the release of our debut we will update our websites with info on the places of its distribution. So stay tuned..

Some final words, comments, insults ... or whatever you like.

I'll close this conversation with some words of the philosopher Pythagoras: 'There is geometry in the humming of the strings, there is music in the spacing of the spheres'...

Hail

Jute Gyte

Hello there. I hope all is fine with you and it is nice to have a chance to talk a bit about your band Jute Gyte. When I take a look at the band name, then a German expression (in dialect) comes to mind, which can be translated into English in the following way: (gute Güte) good God. Am I on the right track or what do you try to express through your name?

The name "Jute Gyte" is meaningless, a collection of letters chosen for its sound. I've occasionally considered changing it, but in genres like electronic music and metal, where strange and/or invented names (i.e. Drexciya, Havohej) flourish, it seems appropriate enough.

In terms of conceptual background, what has been the idea behind Jute Gyte? Why did you start this band, when did it see the light and what are the core aspects of the music?

There is no grand unifying conceptual aim. I wanted an outlet for my musical ideas and so Jute Gyte was born. Forced to attempt identifying core features in my work, I would probably suggest a focus on process (gradual change over time), irregular meters and polyrhythm (itself a type of gradual change over time), and a generally experimental approach.

Why did it take four years between the date of its foundation and the first release? Were you collecting ideas or what prevented you from getting 'things done'?

I was young when I first began making music under the name Jute Gyte, and much of the work I created in that period is simply juvenilia. Additionally, at that time it was not as easy to self-release music as it is today.

In the later years the albums seem to have been spread somewhat continuous. Do you write music on a daily basis or do you need a special atmosphere to be able to achieve this?

Musical ideas occupy my thoughts daily, but I do not actually write/perform/record daily. I do create music often, though how much of it ends up on an album is another matter. If my recent output seems prolific, it is because I have a large amount of material waiting to be released and only recently have I been able to release it. For instance, my album Ghost Sickness was completed in 2007 but only released in 2010.

Even though the Metal Archives lists JG as 'experimental black metal', the oeuvre of the band is much broader isn't it? Some of your outputs are entirely ambient for instance. Can you sort the band according to the concept and write a bit on the approach used there?

I have released music that could be placed in a variety of genres. Again, there is no grand concept governing this. I enjoy a variety of styles and so create varied music.

In terms of the way to compose music, is there a difference for you when it comes to black metal or ambient?

The difference is the primacy of the riff in (black) metal. In black metal, and metal in general, the focal point is the repetition and elaboration/development of series of musical phrases, usually performed on electric guitars. Subjective qualities like "mood" and "atmosphere" should primarily be defined by riffs and the structure and form in which the riffs reside; production, lyrics, etc. help but are essentially less important. In that vast non-genre ambient a given musical phrase carries less weight. The relations between musical elements are generally more egalitarian, less hierarchical. And of course approaches that do not use pitched material are different from those that do. If it even needs mentioning, this kind of analysis is hardly on my mind when I am actually writing or playing the music.

Why do you use the separation altogether? Why don't you use some sort of a hybrid for all of your releases or spread specific music under a specific banner? A lot of black metal artists would rather start a side-project and not 'harm' the main one.

These are difficult questions. I will attempt to answer in sequence.

➤ Why do you use the separation altogether?

My creative process often does not begin with a genre targeted in my mind. I simply pursue musical ideas as best I am able and each piece ends up where it ends up. Since I like a variety of music it should not be surprising that I make a variety of music. The most genre-determinant choice made early in the process is initial instrumentation: for instance, a feedback loop of effect pedals is unlikely to produce black metal riffs.

➤ Why don't you use some sort of a hybrid for all of your releases?

Attempts to force genre-hybridization often fail because the final product, instead of being stronger for its genre-parents' surface similarities, is weaker for the compromises resulting from those parents' deeper differences. I'm sure you can think of "boundary-pushing" albums that sound inelegant or unintentionally jarring. It seems to work better if it occurs naturally, maybe because of subconscious recognition of deeper commonalities. Aiming for forced, uniform genre-hybridization merely to better conform to market standards is artistically untenable.

➤ Why don't you spread specific music under a specific banner?

It would be similarly untenable to partition off the various styles. If project A is pure black metal, project B is pure noise, and project C is 50% black metal and 50% noise, under which project should I release an album of 75% black metal and 25% noise? Additionally, some things are resistant to categorization: under what genre, and therefore project, would I file "Snail" from Old Ways? Since they're all by the same individual, with the same single underlying musical "personality", would it not be better to choose a single banner? In general I feel that the answer is "yes", though economically the answer is probably "no": artists are generally not rewarded for stylistic divergence. But coming to fields like black metal and experimental electronic music in search of financial rewards would be farcical anyway and so this is largely irrelevant.

Why do you play black metal anyway? Does this genre have a certain fascination for you, which you are unable to express through ambient or noise?

I like both the core musical elements of black metal and its openness to experimentation and idiosyncrasy. Certain melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and structural ideas end up fitting into black metal's particular set of timbres and confines, I suppose. Obviously melodic/harmonic concepts are not well-expressed in a harsh noise context. This is not exactly a profound answer, but the question "why does abstract musical idea X end up in piece Y filed under genre Z" is quite abstract and difficult and involves choices made subconsciously.

Was there an album that sparked your interest doing music and how did you endeavour in the noise scene begin?

Bands like Nine Inch Nails and Nirvana were probably my very earliest influences. If these seem like awfully aboveground quotidian choices, I'll suggest that growing up in rural Missouri, USA pre-internet does not leave one with easy access to bands with song titles like "Chainsaw Gutsfuck". Through music like that I ended up encountering noise and its relatives, specifically the music Relapse/Release put out when they were hoping for a noise/metal union: Merzbow's *Venereology*, Masonna's *Inner Mind Mystique*, and Dissecting Table's *Human Breeding* (a personal favorite).



Interesting are also the titles of your two black metal outputs: Old Ways and Young Eagle. What have your reasons been for picking the titles and could elaborate a bit the meaning behind them? Do the titles reflect a different understanding in terms of the music?

Without revealing too much, Old Ways is thematically concerned with the concept, implicit in certain black metal, of endless war and unconditional adversariality, and the title refers to the perversely traditional nature of this concept. Young Eagle's main theme is immense, apocalyptic environmental destruction in the name of imperialist capitalism, religion, and general suicidal self-centered short-sightedness. The "young eagle" represents the remnants of society after, for instance, a nuclear exchange, violently "birthed" into a dead world.

What might surprise that your music does not come in a way that would resemble what ambient bands generally tend to produce. Old Ways for instance has considerable influences of noise in it, while Young Eagle has those 'non-metal' aspects rather separated from the core facets. Why these rather different approaches and when it comes to future metal outputs, which of these might be found on them?

The different approaches assert themselves. I didn't set out to work on Young Eagle thinking it would be so unlike Old Ways. These things just happen organically. My third black metal album, which should be out soon, is less noisy even than Young Eagle and musically much more complex. Following that album I've continued exploring different approaches, though there is a preference for nonstandard meters and dense harmony and counterpoint.

Judging from the sound, you seem to prefer the underground branch of the black metal music. Why don't you have a more 'powerful' sound? Especially Old Ways comes in a rather raw and noisy fashion.

The production certainly wouldn't be confused with the slick modern death metal style but I think it is appropriate, meaning that it communicates the musical concepts well. This includes the very loud, ugly production of Old Ways.

How has your music evolved over the years? Are you still able to enjoy your early outputs?

I think I have become better at communicating my musical thoughts, by which I mean that the final product now generally conforms better to the original intention. My musical thinking itself has, in response, probably grown more sophisticated as well. I listen to my past work, though not often: by the time it has been released I have heard it countless times and it can easily become over-familiar.

How important are lyrics to you? Those who do not own your outputs, the Metal Archives can be used as a proper reference and the band entry reveals some interesting concept. Contrary to the common approach to use verse and chorus, Jute Gyte offers something like a 'story' or a text that is presented in a rather free style along with the music. Do you perceive this as more natural, because you compose also ambient music or what are the benefits of this way of dealing with the lyrics? Can you enjoy music with a verse/chorus scheme as well?

I feel that lyrics are secondary to the music itself, but I appreciate good lyrics a great deal and work hard to provide strong lyrics for my work. For me lyrics are the most difficult, time-consuming part of the process, more difficult to create than the music which they accompany, despite their secondary status. Much black metal eschews verse-chorus lyrics for the simple reason that black metal generally does not use verse-chorus musical structures, and my work is no exception. Of course I have no problem with verse-chorus structures.

Another aspect would be the content or the meaning of them. Old Ways comes with a strange cyber-sci-fi-war theme, while Young Eagle has more of an apocalyptic tone. Do you read novels of such sorts or what your influences? Why do you deal with such topics and in such metaphorical way at times?

The literature that has most affected me: David Foster Wallace, Cormac McCarthy, Robert Aickman, H.P. Lovecraft, Edward Thomas, Kafka, Michel Houellebecq, Anglo-Saxon poetry, Curtis Roads, Douglas Hofstadter, David Markson's Wittgenstein's Mistress, Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars series, Stanislaw Lem's Memoirs Found in a Bathtub, etc etc etc.

Why don't you rely on the general clichés of the black metal scene? Satanism, pentagrams and inverted crosses?

I am an atheist and do not find Satanism especially useful for my artistic purposes. That said, to further the album's themes I used an image of Eliphas Levi's pentagram, with "Tetragrammaton" dispersed between its points, superimposed over a photo of a WWI casualty as the disc art for Young Eagle.

As you move between the barriers, what is it that black metal can gain from the noise scene or vice versa?

The challenge is that black metal's fundamentals are pitched materials like riffs, melodies, and harmonies, and noise is a poor venue for such elements. Since complex details are likely to be lost, a simple and repetitive style of black metal might be the best fit with noise. This is the approach used on Old Ways. However, I have not listened to many artists pursuing a mixture of black metal and noise. It's possible that someone else has discovered a more elegant solution.

How have the responses been over the years? Are there certain releases that reached a larger audience than others?

My black metal work has garnered the most attention thus far. I suspect this is in large part due to the write-up Aquarius Records gave Old Ways.

Do you also play on stage? In case you do, how have the experiences been?

I have not played live.

You also run the label Jeshimoth Entertainment, don't you? What kind of music is distributed through it? Why did you choose to start your own label and distribute your music by yourself? Do you prefer this kind of liberty?

I co-own/operate Jeshimoth Entertainment, which releases a variety of experimental music from metal to noise to pop. I like having complete control over my music's release, and am happy to have released music by artists whose work I enjoy.

The last update of the homepage seems to be about a year ago. How is the status of the label? Do you have some new stuff coming up?

Despite indications the label continues functioning. Several new releases should be available soon, including my third black metal album. Presumably at that time the website will finally be updated.

How can people contact you? What releases are available and where can they be bought?

I can be contacted through my website, <http://jeshimoth.com/jutegyte>. My music is available in physical form there, and in digital form through standard outlets like iTunes and Amazon. Most importantly all my albums are available digitally, name your price (including \$0.00), from <http://jutegyte.bandcamp.com>.

If something else to say, then this would be the last chance to do so.

Thank you for the thoughtful interview.

Rotorvator

Hello there ... good to have a chance to talk to you. How are times in Italy?

hello O., thanks for this opportunity.

Probably from the outside, news from Italy seems a series of bad jokes... unfortunately they are all true. This country is slowly but constantly decaying, maybe this is the perfect environment for playing our stuff.

First of all it seems quite appropriate not only to explain your name but also your intentions for starting your project. Was there an album, a sound, something that made you form this band?

What made you start playing this mixture between black metal, ambient and noise? Were you influenced by certain bands or did it just come naturally because you wanted to reach for extreme levels in terms of the music?

We started Rotorvator by chance. we met once while we were really drunk and decided to make music inspired by Black metal... at first nobody thought this thing could be something to last long, but hey, here we are! We didn't decide at all how Rotorvator had to sound, we just try to play as loud as possible bringing together all our influences. Probably we were inspired at the beginning by the most outrageous noise black metal acts like Gnaw Their Tongues, you can hear this clearly on our first EP, but we think we have moved very soon to something different.

We wanted a short band name and when one of us came out with Rotorvator, everybody agreed because we are really great admirers of Coil. They really succeeded in making music that feels menacing, sick and otherworldly without gimmicks like facepainting, swords and unicorns. Perhaps we hope someday to reach their level of intensity and dedication, only within a metal template.

Italy has quite an interesting history in terms of noise and noise artists. Did this have an impact on you as well? Are you familiar with the art of the Futurist movement? Do you like the music of Luigi Russolo for instance?

We appreciate legendary acts like Maurizio Bianchi or Mathausen Orchestra, but we were more influenced by English and German musicians, especially of the Industrial Movement. We are all involved in visual communication and graphic art, so we know and have studied the futurist movement, perhaps the last great Italian artistic movement. Regarding Russolo, we don't think his music is a particularly interesting listen; Futurism gave his best contribution to music in theoretical works... the writings by Balilla Pratella forecast every evolution in popular music of the last century.

Should music reach for a great variety of different levels of intensity, which can range from quite calm to overtly aggressive? Or should be rather minimal and offensive; if you take Harsh Noise Walls for instance? What is your opinion on this aspect?

We don't think that music in general should be something specific: everything made with a purpose in mind that succeed in it is interesting, at least.

We love Noise and it's definitely a genre that influences our project, especially in electronics. It's good that Harsh Noise exists as well as Pop Music.



Is it important for you to have a balance between the black metal and the noise or is it possible that the latter or the former might take the overhand some day?

As we said before we only decided to work inside a black metal frame, but everything else is never planned. We don't think in terms of musical genres, like we need a bit more this or that...we just try to do our own stuff. Beside that, we believe that noise in Rotorvator plays an important part, but we could say the same thing about Industrial, Electronica or Psychedelia.

Your band contains several members and how does one have to imagine that the actual process of composing music takes place? Do all of them have the same musical background or does this shift from person to person? How do you start and what is the one aspect with which it all begins?

There is not a specific way to start making a song, we share our ideas in the rehearsal room and then we play together till the songs take form.

We've different backgrounds and different approaches to playing but we've a common feel about what we want to do with our music and we instantly realize when we have reached the kind of results we are satisfied with.

What equipment do you use and did you record the music by yourself or in a professional studio?

The band is formed by a guitar player, a musician in charge of samples and drum machines and a vocalist; we hope in a near future to be able to not use prerecorded stuff anymore, but we need additional equipment for that.

We started recording on our own, but lately we are using a producer and a professional studio because we want to try to have a more powerful sound without sacrificing our rough edge... But it's a bit soon to understand if this is the right path to follow!

Who was responsible for your logo?

The guitarist made the logo using a mathematical function on a drawing software, then the vocalist redrawn it by hand

In general, the three of us are responsible for all the Rotorvator artwork

Two releases have seen the light of day since. The first was self-titled ep, while the second had the title Nahum. What is the explanation behind the name? What does Nahum refer to?

Nahum is a minor prophet of the old testament, who predicted the fall of Niniveh. He only wrote three small chapters, but there are some vivid depictions of destruction inside. Even if the EP was done before having a title, most of the lyrics deals with apocalyptic scenarios, so we thought that the choice was perfect.

How would you describe the music on your two releases so far? Have you already made up your mind in terms of the direction you want to go with the band? Nahum was not as offensive as your first output.

After Nahum we talked a bit about our sounds and the only things we decided is to have a more simple/lean sound. We don't think that first EP is more offensive, only rougher and more punkish, because when we made it we were playing for only about 3-4 months, anyway we respect your view obviously.

We've now recorded like ten new tracks and we think they are the more intense Rotorvator has ever made. They will be out this autumn and then we'll eagerly wait for your impressions!

Currently you only use a drum-computer, or? Is there a chance to hear real drums at any point in the future?

Yes, for now, we're using a drum-machine and samples.

As all the thing in Rotorvator this is not mandatory. We think that the most important thing in our project is the feeling. The starting point for a new song can be an House Music sample or some saturated rock guitar riffs and it's not easy, for us, to find another person with the same open mindedness and dedication required to be into Rotorvator.

So, if in the future we'll find someone with this attitude and that know how to play drum she/he will be welcome!

How important are vocals for you? They range from some croaking like manner to violent screams. Could samples fill the role as well?

Vocals in Rotorvator are considered just like another instrument. The blending of the screams into our sound is far more important than the actual lyrics.

We could use samples but they will never substitute vocals because we are trying to use less pre recorded sound as possible and they are essential to the impact of the live setting

Do you like those fancy clips some bands take from B or C movies and web into some ambient and/or noise music?

At first they were pretty funny and we think they was a quick and good idea to promote music.

As always when things become formulaic they begin to become really boring quickly, but anyway, who cares...

Are those whale sounds in Sinking Cathedrals?

Yes they are. Whales are awesome animals and we love to have their awesome sound inside our music.

What made you design Nahum in such a fancy manner? The pictures were great and added a really sweet touch to the professional way that you present everything. Who had the ideas to this and where did you take the pictures from? Or did or someone else you made them?

We think package is very important to enhance the feeling we want to convey with our music and it's the extra stuff that can't be downloaded from filesharing programs.

Regarding Nahum, the idea was that every picture had to depict one of the tracks and the last represents Nahum as a whole. We hadn't the time to take the pictures ourselves, so we choose some free photos on the net and then we cropped them a lot to better reflect what we wanted to mean. Then we added some drawing that are loosely based on the lyrics.

How have the responses on your art been so far? Will you continue to spread the music on your own or do you try to get in touch with a label?

We didn't care too much about promoting our music, but the responses so far are mostly good.

The first EP as well as our brand new tape with Rhuith were released by Dokuro Records, a small noise label run by one friend of ours. We have tried to send our material to other labels, but we prefer to contact only the ones we truly respect. Anyway, it seems that now people are starting to get more interested in Rotorvator.



How was this collaboration with Cosmesi established? Did they contact you or did you meet somewhere by chance? Were they familiar with your music?

The guys in Cosmesi are long time friends. One of us had made some video animations for their previous performance and they used for the soundtrack the song Abiura from our first EP as well. When they asked us if we were interested in making a performance together we were thrilled by the idea so we accepted gladly.

What were the next steps? Did they show you one of their performances? Did they orient their movements on stage according to your music – as it was – or did you have to change certain passages?

It was clear from the beginning that we have to play like it was a normal gig so, yes, they had to adapt their actions to our music that is by no way subtle...

For example they realized that keeping the actress standing still while the music was reaching a peak was powerful enough without adding superfluous actions.

On the other side, we had to write a quieter piece for the last section, to let the action unfold at a faster pace, but this was the only thing they asked us.

Do you feel this is something that can be applied to black metal in a broader sense?

We think to Black Metal more like an approach, a feeling than a music genre so, yes, anything can be applied to it.

Like you can use in cinema horror as a language, but your movie can deal with anything from pure escapist fun to social commentary.

By looking back at the collaboration, do you think this would be something you would like to do in the future again?

we loved this experience and we are very open to any kind of collaboration especially if we get involved in something different from our background. We think that is something that enriches us and let us grow as musicians. The important thing is to not betray our roots and keep making the music for which we have started this project

How will it be released? Is there a chance to see it on CD or DVD or what are the plans with the filmed stuff?

We haven't enough video material and we came to realize that on the screen most of the impact the performance had live was lost so the only plan, aside from making other shows this summer, is to put the live record on free download on our blog in the near future.

Why did you pick the name Nero? Did this something had to do with his works as an artist or are there other reasons why this makes an ample description for your release?

Not at all, Nero in italian means simply black... Cosmesi came with the name before we had composed any music so the concept is entirely theirs.

The idea was a short outburst of blackness (an EP) to depict the condition we are living in, a scenario where people can no longer nourish any hope.

Clearly this is a concept that fits well Rotorvator, so it was very natural to write music inspired by it.

While preparing these questions I was thinking:

Why not combine a more improvised version of black metal and noise together with something like drawing on stage. Do you think such could lead to positive results?

It's an interesting idea and, as we say before, we'll pursue actively any collaboration that let us interact in original ways with other arts.

In the future we will work more actively in multimedia as well, even if we have no fixed plan yet.

If you take a look at the black metal genre in general, do you think it is too conservative and too narrowly focused on a lot of aspects: Satanism, imagery, scene code etc.? Is there too much limitation of old and established concepts, while new ones are avoided for some reasons; like loss of the fan base for instance?

we don't think that there is a right way to answer your questio. Sure, some of its antics have become cliché and they have lost the evocative power they had initially but Black Metal is a music that draws its strengths from using archetypes of fearful and arcane topics so, as usual, it depend on the ability of the single band to convey the right feelings. We listen to a lot of BM bands that tries to be original sounding lame as well as groups that are really good without breaking the orthodox BM concepts.

Anyway, we don't think any of this acts are behaving in such a manner to preserve a fun base that, few exceptions aside, is really small-

Do you listen to black metal and are there certain albums that have left a mark upon you and to which you like to turn to for inspiration?

The black metal records that left a permanent mark on us are the usual suspects: those from the early innovators (Bathory, Hellhammer) and all the great albums that come not only from Norway in the first years of the 90's. Regarding recent times we are constantly interested by the rawer and more aggressive acts and we can say that, on the whole, in the last years we found a lot of interesting band coming from the USA. But everybody here have different tastes and, in general, we think that we listen and are inspired by non metal acts more.

Do you like the Internet and the flood of music that has become available through its rise? Have you been able to rise some gems to the surface recently?

It's a complex question... maybe it would take several pages to answer correctly! Like every major shift in communication and fruition of music we'll really see all the consequences, good or bad, in the future. Anyway the possibility to exchange music without sending blank tapes all around the world is really positive!

It's difficult to take the cream of the crop, due to the sheer volume of music made and spread and honestly, with the myspace demise, we find more difficult to get in contact with interesting underground band as before. In the past, we made contact and trade with some really awesome acts like Rhuith, A Death Cinematic, Lonesummer, Murmuüre, etc.

So far you have only released CDs. Is there a chance to see you spread some tapes and vinyls in the future? Do you like those analogue outputs or do you prefer their modern pendants?

CDs are cheaper and more practical to produce, but we definitively love vinyls because they are superior in every way possible. Tapes are a fond memory of the past, unpractical but we dig their analog sound. We have just released a collaboration with Rhuith on tape and we'll have a 10" split in autumn.

Do you have some releases forthcoming?

Two releases are planned for september/october: as we said before Frohike Records will put out a vinyl split with Carlomargot, an italian electronic duo and we'll have our first album out on Crucial Blast for its Crucial Blaze imprint.

How can people get in touch with you? Are some of your releases available right now?

We have a blog:

<http://rotorvatorblack.blogspot.com/>

and our mail:

rotorvatorblack@gmail.com

and some music can be listened here:

<http://soundcloud.com/rotorvator>

Right now we have only the last few copies of Nahum, that's all.

Some final words if you like

we'll really love to play live more, especially outside Italy! So if someone is interested get in touch!

Akollonizer

Hello there. How are you? After a rather generic beginning, an even more generic question: Would you mind introducing the band a bit? Where are you from, what are its members and what part do they play in the Akollonizer? Do they have some additional side projects?

Hi oneyoudontknow!! First at all, thanks for your interest on the band.

Well, I'm from Andorra but I'm living in Barcelona. The first idea about the band was in 2003 but it wasn't a reality until 2004 when Karkassa (O.D.I., Ze Pekeño, Entropia) and I started to work on some ideas about how we wanted to be reflected them in our proposal.

It was a long time until the first work was released because of several problems unrelated to the band. Nowadays, Karkassa is not a member of the band. The updated line up is:

Wilhkiem - Double bass & guitars (Shemhamphorash, Foscor)

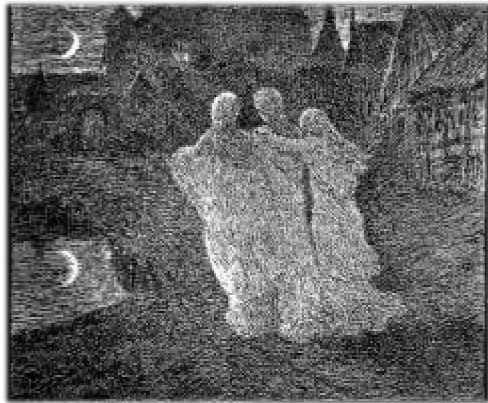
Iker – Guitars, keyboards & noises (Soizu, FFTPlayers, ex-Sorcun, ex-Atomoog)

JNTrio – Drums (The Kokongs, JNTrio, One Million Skulls)

Panta Rei – Voice & Screams (One Million Skulls)

What does the band name refer to? Is it an artificial term or is it based on a word from a certain language?

It's an artificial term created from the Catalan slang word "Acollonir" which means "to make fear" or "to scare". It's a kind of joke about all this bands which finish their names with -zer like Brutalizer, Sodomizer, etc, especially non English bands with non English names like Petardizer, etc



When I informed correctly, then you have only released one album so far, or? How did this release cam to happen and who is the other band O.D.I.?

Yes, it's Akollonizer's only one release until now. In the beginning, the idea was a tape released only with Akollonizer.

After a few rehearsals, Karkassa, who plays in O.D.I., told me that he just finished a new work with his band and

he'd like to edit it on a split with my band.

I really like his work with O.D.I. and, for me, it was a great pleasure to see my first release with his work in a same edition.

O.D.I. is one of Karkassa's side projects, as I said in the first question. He is a really good friend of mine and a multi disciplinary artist. He writes poetry and organises poet's meetings, he is involved in paintings and sculpture and, of course, is extremely focused on music and sound research. The mysticism of his music comes from his interest in ancient religions and brotherhoods.

This split album with O.D.I. is quite peculiar in its style because your tracks are based on the works of the Prague writer/novelist Franz Kafka. Why him? He is rarely picked in the extreme realms of the music. Do you enjoy his writing or what would be the background for your reasons?

The choice comes from a metamorphosis' reading I did when I was in school (I was 12), somebody becoming cockroach was something incredible for me but I did not understand anything by the ineptitude of the teacher who showed us the text as a horror story. The point is that over time I recovered the text after reading a biography of Kafka and Wham! my eyes were opened.

Then, I could see, since my point of view, the message of the text and I could see my personal experiences in the story.

Definitely, my background influenced in the perception of the message.

And yes, I enjoyed his writing both for its sense of humor as for his description of feelings and the dark atmosphere that surrounds the entire work. I think there are a lot of stuff in his art which can be brought to the music, as for the concept or message to his way of writing. (Sadly, I don't understand German which doesn't allow me to enjoy and understand 100% all the aspects of his writing. Translations always miss part of the authors style)

To hear an interpretation of 'Die Verwandlung' (The Metamorphosis) is not such a surprise actually, because it would be one of his few completed works. How do you feel about what the setting, the story and the meaning of it?

I identified myself with Gregor and the story.

I see Gregor as the guy who wants to find his own path in life but he can't because of the society (represented on his father, tenants, boss) rooted in old and conservative values.

But this isn't the problem because he wants to live, work and love his family as usual but they don't accept the new path choose by Gregor.

About how I feel in front the story, I sympathize with Gregor, actually I do with everybody who fights for his own goals, ideas and life style.

I do it if this people respect the choices of others.

Gregor doesn't get this from his family, boss and tenants (society)

Do you think that this text is still relevant today? Does today's society create situations that are or might be similar to the one lain out in the text?

Absolutely!! I think the society has been built like the father who wants, or thinks, that his work and statement is the correct way for living, beliefs and everything involved in it.

If some individual or group is making its own path is called madman, asocial or anything else to erase him or, simply, not leave he develops as an individual.

Look, we are in a great crisis provoked by the same guys who are getting money from governments to fix all this mess. Would you trust on somebody who steals and corrupts??

It's time to change.

I think that while we live in a conservative society, the text of Kafka will be fully in force

In terms of the lyrics you only seem to have taken rather fragments of the whole story. What passages did you choose and for what reasons? Did you try to put an emphasis on Gregor and was your attempt to provide the listener with some sort of a summarization of the entire text?

Basically, I tried to focus on Gregor; what he feels fighting for his new condition, trying to explain to his family that everything is normal, that he's still their son despite his new look and praying for respect.

As I said above, I identified personal experiences in the text, that was what inspired me. The idea was to show how I felt through Gregor's characters and the price sometimes we have to pay in order to achieve our goals.

I think that Kafka's work, in general, can be understood, depends on the reader.

If you are a conservative guy, you will understand the father who try to hide his own son because is a rebel who doesn't want to follow the father's learnings, embarrassing him.

But, if you are a guy who wants to make your own path despite the tradition or your social condition, definitely, you are going to identified yourself with Gregor who claim for respect in his choice.

In what language were the lyrics written?

In Catalan, it's my first language.

My English is not enough good for writing a creation and I don't feel comfortable singing in Spanish.

Yet this all is merely the conceptual background of the music, the actual execution is really intense. Why did you choose such an extreme approach? The music is a violent combination of grind, noise, sludge and what not.

We think the main message of the text is about rupture of Gregor with his daily routine, symbolized with his metamorphosis. This means different feelings which we tried to capture not only with lyrics but also with sound.

We must remember Kafka shows to us that for Gregor this change is not the most important (he only thinks about his work, family and his love for them and how to help them without giving more importance to his transformation, as if it were something natural)

But this point of view is not share for his surrounding and that's the fact that open the door to all this extreme feelings

That feelings are hope, frustration, love, anguish, despair, ... They perfectly fit with the intensity of the music.

Besides, I feel comfortable performing extreme and experimental music

To me it sounded like you wanted to express the impossibility of Gregor to express himself in a meaningful way to his parents/sister, while at the same time reaching the point of hysteria and being therefore unable to clearly articulate himself in terms of his own thoughts; the panic and the confusion about the situation. Your response?

Absolutely agree with you.

Don't you think that this is what is happening with us in front of a society, monotheism or boss with a close mind??

Specially when you try to do what you want or express your own point of view out of the majority??

I think Gregor's situation is a metaphor of this, annihilation of your individuality, your free thinking and your feelings in front of this.

In terms of the vocals, there is some similarity with the Spanish band Entropia, isn't it? At least when listening to their Takte Mörbid output.

I think this was inevitable due to the presence of Karkassa (bassist and singer of Entropia) in the band. Although he only put his voice in one track (Traïdoria), the piggy one.

The rest of voices are mine. I have spent a lot of time with Entropia as a manager, in concerts and participating with them in their live shows which must influenced on Akollonizer's voices.

Do you plan to play live or have you already done so? How have the responses been?

Until now we only played in one concert, last November in ANTI-RATZINGER FESTIVAL in Barcelona.

It was a festival organised as a protest against Pope's visit in town financed with public money (the Pope's visit!!! Not the concert)

The plan is to rehearse the new songs, recording them and, after summer, started making the first concerts.

We want to mix music with performance, actually, in Anti Ratzinger concert, we mix music with Butoh and we like to work on it in order to create a solid proposal.

The responses were really good, we were the only band which didn't play black or death, I mean we were the "rara avis" in the festival and the audience were more receptive to our show.

The feedback was really good and people enjoyed and liked our proposal.

We'll see what happen in a concert only with us, hehehehehe!!!!

I have a rather vague question:

Kafka was someone, whose writings were influenced by Søren Kierkegaard for instance; a Christian writer, theologian and philosopher. You can further see a transcendental aspect in a lot of Kafka's works. Yet, when someone visits your homepage you see an inverted pentagram. How are you able to bridge this gap? Is it an artificial one?

It's a mixture of different symbols which represent band's philosophy just so the nickname chosen by myself, *Panta rei*.

This is a concept used by Heraclitus of Ephesus to explain his thinking or philosophy.

This concept means "Everything Flows" and one of his quotations was, "Everything flows, nothing remains" or if you prefer "We never bathe twice in the same river", that means that we are in constant evolution which is necessary to improve as person and individual and get the knowledge in order to live without restraints and lead by our self.

Heraclitus was a philosopher who lived in the sixth century BC who rooted his thinking on this constant evolution of all things and beings, and also in the struggle of opposites "War is the father of all things", A struggle that tends to get the balance between opposites as would be the case, for example, the forces that keep guitar's strings tense.

All this flow of events, it's symbolized by the fire taking by him as a key element in the development of his philosophy. For him, it is the beginning of the universe (arche) and represents the dualism as base of everything (Fire exists only consuming and destroying) while constantly changing form (evolution and creation)

All this chaos creates harmony through the Logos (knowledge) found in all things and, obviously, in human being.

According to Heraclitus the person has to find the logos within and only then you recognize yourself as an individual and you will be able to evolve.

The pentagram is embraced by an ouroboros which is one of the oldest known symbols and it has been adopted by many cultures. The snake is a basic symbol for anarkosatanism (our path of thinking) and it represents the path of knowledge (light) to find your inner self and be free of social and religious ties that will not let you grow as individual. But this knowledge searching is eternal, you must work on it all your life, that's represented by ouroboros.

To get this knowledge or light is necessary to break with all, to leave taboos let go of, to break with the past in order to initiate self-improvement. This is symbolized by snake's shedding of the skin, this is like a rebirth after your social being's death.

The two snakes in the interior of the pentagram around a caduceus represent the flow of the universe, its movement and evolution, which are indispensable for the regeneration of the being. The pentagram represents the universe in its four elements (upper points) driven by the individual or the self (lower end).

All this amounts to saying that an individual, by itself, can be as a person without any protection, either divine or earthly. That means, the path chosen by the person or individual is not transferable, you and only you are responsible of your destiny based on your beliefs and goals.

Have you read something else of Kafka? Like 'The Castle', 'The Trial' or 'America'? In case this is true, what effect did these have had on you?

Other Kafka's works read by me are:

Das Urteil "The Judgment"

Der Verschollene "The Man Who Disappeared"

In der Strafkolonie "In the Penal Colony"

Ein Landarzt "A Country Doctor"

Regarding the effect on me it was my reaffirmation on my freedom searching and the confirmation that nothing changes with time. We live in a fake freedom controlled by religion, politics and social power.

I think that's the main message from Kafka's work, this and happiness searching

Would you mind explaining your logo a bit? How does one have to understand it?

Akollonizer's logo was created by Karkassa. He shown me during the first rehearsal and I thought it was good.

About why it looks like this, it is simply the result of the creation or imagination of him.

I added the pentagrams whose meaning I have explained above



Are you able to rehearse on a constant basis and how does the song-writing take place?

We have had several problems for keeping a line up which haven't allowed to rehearse properly, until now.

The new songs have been composed between Iker (guitar and noises) and me, then, these are worked and finished in the rehearsal by the whole band

About the song-writing, basically, is doing by me. First at all, I propose the concept of the new work and write some ideas, then we agree how we want the music expresses the lyrical concept.

Or some of the guys bring some ideas for a song and I write the lyrics depending of the feelings that the song transmits to me

What bands and albums would you cite as influences when it comes to your art?

I have been listening to a lots of music of different styles for years. It's impossible to avoid influences from them.

In "La Transformació" the main design influence is from Corrupted.

About the music, I don't know. I think the work is conceptual comes from the seventies bands that made long and conceptual issues.

But neither I would know to give you specific names

Do you have plans for a new release already? Is there a chance to see another novel or text interpreted by you?

We must record after summer the new songs, it's another conceptual issue focused in monotheisms and how evolve from its beginning, being a pure idea, to the top of its power, dominating and being corrupted by this power.

I'd like to work on another Kafka's novel, in particular In der Strafkolonie "In the Penal Colony", I think it's an interesting parallelism with the behaviour of west democracies in front of dictatorships which are tolerated because of the real politics but when they fell or are in decadence, this "west democracies" forget or leave these "friends".

Doesn't it ring a bell to you?? Gadaffi, Mubarak, Pinochet, etc

What releases are available from you and where/how can people acquire these?

We only have one edition, "La Transformació", you can get it writing to Artilleria Pesada Produccins: (artilleria(at)voliac(dot)com).

In this link, you'll find a few distros which have our release in their catalogs.

<http://akollonizer.blogspot.com/2010/03/on-trobar-el-nostre-cd-where-you-can.html>

Or writting to the band:

Akollonizer(at)voliac(dot)com

What about contacting you? Do you have a homepage or the sort?

Home page address is:

<http://akollonizer.blogspot.com>

mail address:

akollonizer(at)voliac(dot)com

artilleria(at)voliac(dot)com

Some final words, if you are still interested.

Thank you for the interview and, specially, for your interest and support on our work and concept!!!

I wish the best in all your projects and in this great zine that you are improving issue by issue!!!!

Count Beetle

Hello again ... did not expect to do an interview with you again, but certain events might require it. Your debut album is about to be released, isn't it?

Actually, not exactly yet...but it should be shortly....everything is finished, and i have a copy myself right now....I am honoured you have interviewed me again

Some months ago the situation looked quite different ... so, what has changed? Who is this label that has motivated itself to spread your music? How was this connection established? What are they specialized in?

The label is SinJin records....I've established this connection with Saint John, a man who believes in the music and ideas who specializes in some good music with a certain atmosphere..this is the best answer, i think

Is this forthcoming album the "Clairaudience" one you were talking about in the previous interview? What kind of music can be found on it? How many tracks will it have? As I discussed these tracks "Corn circles; Faux Squirrels; pre night wayfarer session 97" back then, it would be interesting to know whether they appear on the album as well.

Yes, the same album and vision this is....It is the kind of music that may have more of an intellectual high than a body high, if I can put it down in words....the album has seven songs:

1.Introductions 2. Corn circles 3. Hunter's orange 4. Faux squirrels 5. Patch's circle 6. Night wayfarer 7.The woodline

Yes, back the the vision was the same...the night wayfarer song you mentioned is an early version which was somewhat not yet fully formed, and it is not on this album

If you have to sum up your art in a short way, how would you do this? What can a potential listener find in it?

I suppose you can find an elemental sort of music that is deep and reflects the nature of the observer, in many ways....there is an element of classic horror and some personal things and experiences....but most themes almost always involve supernatural and paranormal significances...there is some fantasy and some more autobiographical material that is more real experience on the last 3 songs of the album

Who is Count Wynston? The homepage of the label suggests as such as he is involved in the band. What is his part?

Count Wynston is the drums....his part is that of fellow, and of musician...he is a lifelong collaborator who adds his drums to Count Beetle material in session and rehearsals.... a rare sort of individual who understands how things must be done with the music

Does it have a release date already? How it will it be released? Some special packaging, when I am informed correctly?

No, it does not formally have a said date, as such....it should be in the format of cd...perhaps a digital format, though don't hold me to that....the packaging comes with a special sort of scroll, encorcelled with some very special, sympathetic artwork which was done by hand in a certain style known to the illustrator Saint John....the scroll has a certain meaning with the art on one side to the night world of count beetle, and the lyrics are on the reverse side...and as i said, it is in the form of an old style scroll....done in a manner long lost to most but like an important message to be passed to the observer in a certain message; a sort of magic link

What will be the format? Is there a chance to see it spread as a tape as well?

As of now the format is set to be cd, but the sound is very analog and done with like equipment....there probably wont be a tape...but it was recorded in essence in this manner...the warm magnetic glow was captured very admirably and done with great care

Could you write a bit about your local scene? How would you compare your own art to what can be found there? Are you influenced by this and try to 'mimic' it in some respect or do you try to craft some sort of a counterpoint?

There is no local scene....the nearest venues are miles away and i don't think you will ever find this sort of music performed there....we neither mimic this scene nor try to oppose it, though this music naturally is outside and stranger than the music in the ozarks, so it does it on its own....i must state that i feel some of it is my own influence of the land, though it is through me, and not a common interpretation of the whole of the collective masses here a hollow log filled with ground bees might mean something else to me than it does to others in this sense we speak of

What music do you generally listen to? Do you have some special albums? Some worn-down tapes and vinyl discs you appreciate for some special reason?

I listen to a wide spectrum of music....special albums in my collection include my Dark shadows volumes on tape, done by the composer Robert Cobert....I appreciate the new Arkazum cd, which is long overdue there are many to mention...but i like the vinyl copy we have of Pink Floyd's Animals...others are the vinyls i have of Led Zeppelin...anything King Diamond gives me the feeling, or most of it, which i own almost all of.. another good album is Songs for the old religion by Gwydion Pennderwyn....I like Marc Gunn and the brobdingnagian bards for my folk music that is traditional; Scottish, Irish, English songs. The hooded man by Jerry Marchand....also i like some various older music than falls in the big band and mellow type styles....For film i would mention Sherlock Holmes with Jeremy Brett and Wind in the willows

What is the "Olde Hainte Press"? This is your project isn't it? What music and arts do you cover there? Why and when did you start this? How many updates appear on this site? Does it appear in print as well somewhere or is all limited to the MySpace site?

The OHP is something i do for fun and fellowship...it was first intended as merely a place to house my writings and share with a select few others...it is a place for certain rare conversations with other artists...there are interviews with some of the folks ive mentioned already, music that i like myself...and there are some black metal interviews with Darkthrone and Burzum as well as one of the last Mutilation interviews....i started this a few years ago and right now it only appears there and was once only able to be viewed by an esoteric few...it might grow somehow...one must bear in mind that some of the music here is not related to Count Beetle in any other way than i might like it as music myself



It is also a place where some of my writings might appear at times....it could also be a place to contact me about the paranormal or for any "work" related therein or related conversation on this matter....

This seems interesting, because you play some strange kind of folk music, but write about black metal. How does this play out? Do you like this genre for a particular reason? Is there a chance to hear you play black metal of some sort, or have you done so already?

Well, i like this genre; or rather what it once was, but i was not there at the beginning, other than listening to some like things, years ago...a particular interest in in the darker aspects, like horror and the devil, for instance...and the atmosphere

There is probably no chance at all you will ever hear me play from this genre...I found my sound a long time ago, and to do someone other style would be far away from

all i do or intend to do with Count Beetle....so in fact i have written about black metal in the form of conversation with a few folks who formed this style

but if you look i also have done interviews with Celtic harpist Jerry Marchand and scottish/irish folk singer Marc Gunn of Brobdingnagian Bards and his own solo music

You will also find Arkazum, which is no where near black metal and features a founder from the doom metal band known as Cathedral...and Eerie Von who does blues and country and, once, Danzig

And there could be actors, or writers just as easily....or a simple baker or farmer for that matter....you never know

What are the contact addresses to get in touch with you?

<http://www.myspace.com/countbeetle>

the OHP site can be found here or directly at:

<http://www.myspace.com/448700594>

one can contact me through either as i run them both

Some final comments?

Thank you for the conversation and it is always an honour to do this.... We have come a long way in Burrowsville to bring you such monstrous burdens

Review section:

Wacky Southern Current – Like The Wind Within The Hollow Tree (2010)

(Italy; Ambient, Post-rock)

7 Tracks (MP3 -- Netlabel: No Source) - _ _ - (29:48)

<http://www.archive.org/details/NS021>

Yes, Italy again. I have no idea why this country tends to pop up again and again in this magazine, but as the music from there tends to be interesting, why not stick with it and help to spread it a bit? 'Wacky Southern Current' are such an example. The release presented in this review is about sound how it can be appropriate for any time and any mood. Rather inoffensive, loaded with gentle melodies as well as harmonies but still catchy enough to keep the listener interested.

A sweet aspect of 'Like The Wind Within The Hollow Tree' is the way the motives transcend through the tracks. 'Robinia' is a good example for this: it starts in the piano, moves on in the guitars, is varied and returns to the piano at the end. Even though other tracks provide a different setting, the overall tension and progression remains basically the same; a calm minimalist opening progresses more in 'intensity' -- do not stress this term too much -- and complexity. The basic approach becomes predictable very soon, but the way the atmosphere unfolds itself compensates the listener in some respect for this shortcoming.

Guitars, keyboards, a violin, an accordion, drums and some 'other' tools used to create ambient textures make up the basic setting of this release. And more would sound displaced. Even though the label describes it as post-rock, the general style is more of ambient that has some influences from said genre. In case someone associates rock with electronic and at times with even intense guitars, then nothing of the sort can be found on this output. Also some characteristic guitar elements – certain solo parts and picking – are rather absent, as the focus was set on the acoustic version of this instrument. In the background lingers a bass-guitar, but its play remains vaguely discernable.

What does the wind in the hollow tree create for a sound? Is it some echoing? Is it something definite? Is it something constant and repetitive? Judge for yourself...

Jozik Records section

<http://jozikrecords.blogspot.com/>

Architeuthis Rex & Banana Pill & Hobo Cubes & Mpala Garoo 4-way (2010)

This tape is a 4-way split and was released by the Finnish label Jozik Records.

The entire length is around fifty-six minutes. It comes in a small bag, which has two small pieces of paper in it. Orange would be the colour the label chose for the tape.

Architeuthis Rex

(Italy; Ambient, Industrial, Drone, Noise)

1 Track (15:02)

<http://blissland.co.cc/home.html>

The first and the longest track on this tape would be by the Italian band Architeuthis Rex. What makes their composition interesting is the way different types of tempo had been woven together. On the one hand, there is a slow and monotonous tone which keeps getting repeated and appears with some hollowing reverb; while on the other, a certain faster motives sets the overall pace, even though it is hardly distinguishable. This contrast does not appear over the entire length, but makes up a considerable share of this track.

'Victimae pischalis laudes' – the title of Architeuthis Rex' contribution – is a mixture of various styles. There are ambient elements, industrial ones and a bit of drone wants to join in with the party, too. It is possible to follow a certain form of melody or progression of the motives, despite the overall complexity and the shiftiness of the art. Some constancy can be identified, but it struggles with some other facets for attention and dominance; as such, the listener is advised to listen carefully what is going on in this track. Drums, noise elements and guitars always attempt to create some diversion ...

A long, a bit hypnotic and also slightly chaotic composition.

Banana Pill

(Finland; Ambient, Drone, Noise)

2 Tracks (15:32)

<http://www.myspace.com/banananapill>

Two tracks, nearly equal in length, are the share of the Finnish band Banana Pill on this 4-way split. Even though the overall approach, sound and atmosphere differs between the first and the second project on this tape, a certain similarity can nevertheless be identified: various types of layers, whose sound and style does not create a 'nice' coherence. Again, those textures, noises and motives work together as well as against each other.

Bonfire:

Consists basically of four (?) different layers: 3 guitars, a vocal texture (?) and keyboards. Not all appear at the beginning and not even over the entire length, but it is interesting to listen how the motives move on, fade out, increase in volume ... etc. In some respect, it all gives the impression of various types of sounds that form a disharmonic harmony.

Hole in the Ground:

Again, the difference in the layers in the music can be discovered, but the overall emphasis is placed somewhere else here. Unlike Bonfire, the second composition comes in a more metal fashion, with droning guitars and also some intelligible screams in the background. These two aspects are accompanied by the strange texture which could also be found in the preceding track.

More focused than Architeuthis Rex but strange nonetheless.

Hobo Cubes

(Canada; Drone, Ambient, Noise)

3 Tracks (15:26)

<http://hobocult.blogspot.com/>

Side two of the tape comes with two different bands and Hobo Cubes would be the first.

Utopian Ocean:

The sound of Klaxons over some shrill screams of sea gulls. All performed by electronic instruments and therefore hardly possible to match the real facets. Overall, a very monotonous composition with a very distinct pattern in the background and changing noise elements in the front.

Dream Freeze:

The title suggests as much, the atmosphere of this composition is otherworldly. Be it the sound or the motives, while listening to it, the strange noise effects along with the wobbling texture in the background might reflect the state of the mind when you are stuck in a dream and find no way out. It should have been longer, though.

Secret Reality:

Resembles the first one by Hobo Cubes, due to the similarity in the rhythm pattern in the background. It is accompanied by oscillating noises and a drone texture in the background. Again, the tension is rather surreal and may be best described what you can experience in certain computer games in which you are forced to enter a different dimension. The surrounding environment forces itself upon the viewer/listener, but the mind of said person seems to be unprepared for it.

Rhythm-driven strange soundspheres.

Mpala Garoo

(Russia; Experimental, Folk, Acoustic)

3 Tracks (10:21)

<http://www.myspace.com/mpalagaroo>

And now for something completely different. Contrary to all preceding bands, Mpala Garoo plays music which comes with a strange sense of beat.

Open Way up High:

While in the background some rhythm is played that in style reminds on the clapping of hooves, guitar perform some sort of melodies. Keyboards and samples complete the picture. The atmosphere is rather easy-going and swift; a nice contrast to what had been presented earlier.

Primitiitoo:

Whatever this track title refers to lies outside the knowledge to the reviewer. Two different guitar sounds play two kinds of melodies in some sort of harmony and 'duel'. A drum pattern lays the basis, while a keyboard and some other noises create a slight diversion. Charming ...

Sister Lightning:

A gentle ending, guitars with some reverb, a sweet melody, but the title is actually misleading. Lightning is generally associated with some devastation or at least intensity, while such is rather absent in this track. Some indie-rock music ... sort of

Melodic guitars and rhythmic but still not commonplace.

To sum the impressions up:

Four bands and for different approaches. The colourful and psychedelic design of the packaging sets the atmosphere for this release: strange music, not really offensive but interesting to listen to.



Banana Pill – Watercolor

(Finland; Experimental, Drone, Ambient)

5 Tracks (CDr) - _ _ - (38:41)

<http://www.myspace.com/banananapill>

This release has some peculiarities:

First, there would be the track titles whose first word would be a colour. Second, the music has a strange peculiarity in terms of the arrangements and style. See, there are some constant elements – droning textures, odd keyboard play and excessive repetition –, which are then accompanied by some other instruments or sounds or whatever to make it somewhat listenable.

This needs some explanation:

Pink Sea is basically an xylophone torment track, because this damn thing plays from the first to the last second; As this alone would hardly be possible to endure, guitars and a wobbling ambient thing create a diversion. This idea of using one motive and stretch it over excess is the general approach used on Watercolour and as there are different tones and nuances, it seems appropriate to shift the atmosphere now and then. This would be the reason why 'Deep Red Morning' sounds like a morning ... the embodiment of pure torture and pain, especially when you have just awoken. It continues this way and 'White Baby Frog' sounds a bit surreal and this does not only have to do with the strange keyboard opening – imagine a cheap price won at a fair and those odd jingles with which these come. Acoustic guitars have some amount of reverb and have a manipulated sound, while additional facets help to create a dense and fascinating atmosphere; take Skytree's Knotwork as one source of reference.

'Silver Mice Sneaking Up' is actually a different take on the idea from the opener, but with less impact in the percussions and an accordion whose play gives the impression of a drone-like texture. Track number five closes this record and while listening to it the following impression simply impeded itself: Andreas Vollenweider on acid. Imagine some of his music but without the sweet build-up and flow, because Banana Pill threw all of these elements together and created a chaotic to and fro of sounds. A perversion of a ritualistic atmosphere.

As written before, water can have different colours and can therefore represent different things. While some are cheering or give us the impression of some sort of harmony, other ones tend to turn us off and maybe even annoy us. This CDr is a strange release and interesting at the same time. You might complain about the general limitation in terms of the arrangements and how low the actual complexity of the compositions are, but maybe this is also the one aspect that needs to be emphasized. Banana Pill were able to craft a piece of art that combined a distinct amount of 'offensiveness' with a haunting hypnotic charm. Maybe not something you might find interesting to listen to on a daily basis, but a sweet distraction now and then.



Bellaras – The Thousand Tombs Of A Broken God

(UK; Death/Doom Metal)

6 Tracks (Tape – Self-released) - _ _ - (35:42)

<http://www.myspace.com/bellaras>, <http://bellaras.painsphere.com/>

It has been the cover that caught my attention and which motivated me to download this release; no, I did not by the tape, because getting foreign currency is a pain in the ass with my current bank. Anyway, the depiction of a man standing next to a hung woman (?) together with this very dark colorization is certainly something that creates some curiosity. By mere glancing over it and letting your mind get impressed by this arrangement, your thoughts wander off and ideas begin to unfold.

What about the music? Is it able to reflect this grim scenery in an appropriate way? Can something of this depressive atmosphere be found in the compositions? The Metal Archives site is a bit misleading in this respect, because the band was labelled as playing 'doom metal'. Even though some truth would be in this, the general approach is much broader, because something close to Candlemass, Electric Wizard and similar bands can most certainly not be found on this demo tape.

Ballaras play death/doom of a slow kind. This means, occasional blasts and such make hardly an appearance. Instead, the riffs progress forward without giving an impression of much haste; 'Pain through Madness' is an exception in some respect. Despite a considerable rawness in the art, the music is actually heavy, but not overdone that it becomes 'crushing'. 'Laid back', while being intense and not too aggressive or even depressive. Furthermore, solo parts, keyboard play, samples of various types, numerous vocal styles and such can be found. In concept, sound and atmosphere it is not too far away from Thergothon, but it has a more 'Gothic' – does anyone get this reference? – touch. Combine the music of the Finns with a bit of the vibe of Sisters of Mercy and change the minimalist growls to something with more punch, then you get a good impression of how Bellaras sound. The aforementioned 'Pain through Madness' has some really nice and otherworldly keyboard motives, while both intro as well as outro work fine with the overall dark atmosphere on the tape.

This demo is quite good actually and especially recommended to those, who have a certain fancy for slow and intensive metal music.

Note:

The release can be downloaded from their homepage. A link to a shop, which sells the tape, can also be found there.

i AM esper – Glowing Valley

(USA; Drone, Ambient, Doom)

5 Tracks (CDr – Dark Meadow Recordings) -_-_- (46:50)

<http://www.darkmeadowrecordings.com/>

What is esper? Who is esper? Is Esper a person or some letter juggling that created for some inexplicable reason a curious and 'readable' word? In a language forum a reference is presented: extra-sensory perception. Yet when you think about it, in terms of the grammar it seems to make little sense. A bit more light on the whole issue is being shed once you take the actual writing of the name into consideration: the 'i' could be interpreted as being from the Roman numerical system, while the 'AM' refers to the '12-hour-clock' system. In such a way, you get some sort of strange explanation.

The explanation for esper is that persons with this skill are able to see in the future, have some sort of supernatural skills. Maybe this is the reason the music is so vague and focused on drone, ambient and doom. A more free style interpretation of the American band 'Earth' style – 'Morning dew' shows some resemblance to 'HEX: Or Printing in the Infernal Method' – maybe, but a reference to Sunn O))) is not given simply because the writer of this review has not listened to their music on a broader scale.

Anyway, 'i AM esper' stick to some sort of ambient/drone music with guitar elements. These facets battle it out in some respect. In the background some (vague) dronish sound can be found, while in the front the guitar play strange kind of melody patterns. To describe everything as being chaotic would be farfetched, but the listener tends to be bombarded with a considerable amount of ideas, which try to push into the front and seem to yearn for attention; Stars above the frozen forest. Other compositions are less complex and have a nice constancy in the arrangements – The dark fog – and as such, the experience to listen to this release is not too exhausting.

Aside from all to and fro 'Glowing Valley' is a rather depressing and dark release. Whether it is appropriate to listen to such stuff at a sunny day in spring when nature begins to unfold its beauty again, might be an issue that differs from person to person. Maybe during the times of twilight this CD is able to unfold its potential. The music is good, well crafted and produced. Even though only five compositions appear on 'Glowing Valley' their length never drops below the mark of six minutes. Headphones are recommended as well as a still or calm atmosphere.

Agga – Agga

(USA; Thrash/Black Metal, Ambient)

7 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - _ _ - (41:00)

<http://www.myspace.com/agga40>

Agga by Agga by Lord of Babylon takes the listener into region that on the first glance might surprise the listener. Even though the pseudonym suggests as much, it is not that obvious to find music with influences from the Middle East performed by an American band. Actually, there is a certain interest in the metal scene in this regard as albums with a similar approach tend to pop-up again and again these days.

Anyway, some basic elements were described above already, but it should be added that the core aspect of Agga's art is some sort of black metal; even though the guitars have a rather small impact. This has to do with their sound – rather thin at times – as well as the way they were placed into the compositions – here: quite in the back now and then. It is rather due to 'oriental' lead-guitar elements that the music receives some heaviness and not due to the rhythm section, like you would commonly expect it; 'The Lord of Babylon'. As such, the album lacks a bit of punch and aggressiveness; 'Desert Death Winds' sounds rather like an exception.

A striking aspect of the whole song-writing seems to be the 'one-melody-at-a-time-thing'. Those who are not familiar with it, the following explanation might clear matters up:

Some bands like to keep their music minimalist and complex at the same time. This can be difficult, because arrangements with a different tempo and style cannot be combined easily. As such, the music is not composed in such a way as to create counterpoints to the main melody but rather something that tends to accompany it. Therefore, the whole damn thing is played by various instruments and even sung by the vocals. Guess how that works ... Agga's art suffers from this approach, but it is kept in tolerable levels. Nevertheless, it is always strange to experience this sort of thing.

The shortcoming of this release is the all too common flaw of one-man-bands: too much simplicity in the arrangements. Again the drum-computer does its best to suck has a high level, due to the rather minimalist as well as predictable way in which it had been programmed. Accordingly, in terms of the rhythm pattern in Agga's art a stark contrast to the overall melodies is created and it is this aspect that makes it a bit tiring to listen to the music. Aside from this, also the reliance of keyboards instead of real 'Middle Eastern' instruments adds a strange touch to the whole listening experience.

Nevertheless, the performance can be described as interesting and actually not overtly bad. Being their first demo, some amount of flaws can be expected. Folkly electronic-loaded black metal with Middle Eastern influences, in case someone has an interest in this particular kind of music, then Agga might help to quench the thirst a bit.



Tumulte – Desordre Social

(Canada; Noise)

4 Tracks (??? – Self-released) - _ _ - (43:52)

<http://www.myspace.com/tumultedoom>

As this release falls into the noise genre, it is generally best to discuss the tracks separately. Those who are interested in a deeper insight into the band, should check with the 12th edition of this magazine, because this has the interview.

TéLaite (4:24)

The opener gives you a clear impression of something you are unable to understand. Distorted voices, accompanied by drone textures and a general decrease in intensity, while close to the end the level of the opening is reached again. Later some screams of a child appear, which might work as a counterpoint to the first voice.

Ambiance Nocturne (14:31)

This track consists basically of a guitar distortion, which is repeated ... and repeated ... and repeated ... and repeated. Actually, this would also be the only real constant on this track, because rather harsh guitar sounds, screams and some intense textures appear in a variety of styles over the entire length. What makes this track interesting is the amount of contrast between the shifts in the music and the underlying constancy and how this plays out.

Désastre (17:58)

Imagine a slightly chaotic industrial environment with a lot of machines, whose constant noises you are able to make out and which create some sort of an indistinguishable messy sound. Such would be the basis for this recording, while on top of it a kind of sharp play of a guitar reminds on an alarm bell no one pays attention to. The music changes over the course of these (nearly) eighteen minutes and becomes more intense as well as noisy, but those core elements can still be identified somehow. An otherworldly composition.

Le Meutre (7:00)

Percussion noises ... later distorted with reverb and accompanied by other noise effects. It all progresses to a wall-like sound, only to break down to the first style again close to the end of the track. 'Le Meutre' is different from the other tracks due to the elements used for this recording. As such, the listener might be a bit surprised about this new concept.

Tumulte, Endemit, Playing with Nuns, O.S.N.A. split album

4 Tracks (MP3 – Cubiculo noise Recording) - _ _ - (21:31)

<http://www.myspace.com/cubiculonoiserecording>

Tumulte – Krapu (6:33)

(Canada; Noise, 'Dark Doom Metal')

<http://www.myspace.com/tumultedoom>

Compared with the Desordre Social output and the music presented on it, this one presents the Canadian band with quite a different concept. Despite the noisy introduction, it later progresses into something 'doomy' dark metal thing. Chords appear in a somehow loose fashion and the noise supports this aspect rather than trying to dominate the music. Krapu is a somewhat minimalist composition that was wrapped in two short bursts of noise; beginning and end respectively.

Endemit – Imp's Violin (2:34)

(Poland; Dark Ambient)

A cello? While listening to this rather short composition, you might suspect as much. Several layers were woven together or is this some sort of strange reverb? Anyway, later some calm noise effects appear in the background as well and add a strange metallic touch to this composition. Actually, it would be interesting to hear more of this band, but as the MySpace site seems defunct, – aka non-existent – it is hard to find something more of this band.

Playing with Nuns – Blinker (6:54)

(Argentina; Dark Ambient, Drone)

<http://www.myspace.com/playingwithnuns>

In the 12th edition of this magazine, a review on this Argentinean band appears as well. Well, compared with the previous two bands, the music takes a leap into a quite different region. Both Tumulte and Endemit had rather reduced and minimalist compositions, while PwN comes with a voluminous and dense sound. Their art is an intense mixture between 'dark ambient' and 'drone', which has a strange lack of bass... really, the 'heights' dominate the music clearly. The music oscillates around a certain idea and progresses in a rather slow manner. Not really my cup of tea.

O.S.N.A. – The hidden cover (5:24)

(Uruguay; Ambient)

The last band on this split release and their composition combines in some respect as in certain limits what had been presented earlier. Keyboards – even though the sound reminds a bit on guitars – play a woeful distorted melody, while additional layers in the background along with the drums add a certain amount of depth to the whole approach. Despite the repetitive structure it is nice to listen to ... occasionally.

Note:

Can be downloaded from this site for free:

http://www.archive.org/details/4WaySplit_496

To sum the impressions on Tumulte up:

Two releases offer a different glimpse on the art of the Canadian noise band. While the former demo is more noise in various facets, the latter split album presents music of a different kind and something that might even appeal to parts of the metal audience. A new release seems to be in the works – see their MySpace site – and which approach the band will follow waits to be seen. When I remember it correctly, then the music has decreased in intensity over the years. Those early two demos were pretty much harsh noise.

Multinational Corporations – Equality

(Pakistan; Death Metal/Grindcore/Hardcore Punk)

3 Tracks (CD – Self-released) -_-_- (8:48)

<http://www.facebook.com/multinationalcorporationspakistan>

It would not be too farfetched to describe Multinational Corporations as an offspring of the Pakistani band Foreskin; they had been reviewed more or less extensive in earlier editions of this magazine. Equality would be the first output of this new band and it has one striking similarity: being rather short. Even though nearly nine minutes with an average of close to three per track suggests otherwise, the last composition on this recording can be calculated out, because it is merely an experimental ambient piece with two narrating newscasters.

Aside from this, MC – no, not Hammer – play a violent type of metal, which stretches over a considerable amount of genres. Grindcore, punk and thrash make an appearance in the opener. Interestingly, it takes some time until this gets really going and unleashes a furious type of music ... only to loose it again soon after. The second piece of much more straightforward, which should not surprise, considering that it is only 77 freaking seconds in length. Some sort of death metal and grindcore hybrid can be found there.

This music deals with political issues in Pakistan, but it might be difficult to grasp each of these. Nevertheless, Equality might be good for a spin or two.

Short ~ _ ~ _ ~ _ ~ Short ~ _ ~ _ ~ _ ~ Short

Rotorvator & Rhuith – February (2011)

(Italy, Italy; Experimental Black Metal, Noise)

4 Tracks (Tape – Dokuro) - _ - _ - (30:03)

<http://www.dokuro.it/>, <http://www.rhuith.blogspot.com/>, <http://rotorvatorblack.blogspot.com/>

As discussed in the interview above, Rotorvator have aligned with Rhuith – an experimental black metal band from Italy – for a tape release. This contains of four tracks, whose lengths are either around four and ten minutes respectively. In case someone has followed the performance of the former project, then this person will notice a certain shift in the music. In terms of the intensity and style, a certain development can be found. The intensity is still apparent, the noise has not vanished, but there is a calmness, which works as a counterpoint to what the band played earlier. Vulpecula, Inedia, Confecta along with the fucked up Paranoid cover version are sickish without reaching for the harshness as well as the aggressiveness of the band's debut ep or the Nahum one. A black metal doom noise bastard with a lot of experimenting and a sick atmosphere.

Those who liked their debut might want to try this collaboration as well, and those who never had a chance to explore the band's art have a chance to follow them on a new and strange path.

Important note:

This tape is limited to 50 copies, so you better hurry ...

(Note: a longer review will appear in the next edition)

Valonkantajat – Lupaus (2011)

(Finland; Melodic Death Metal)

4 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - _ - _ - (19:15)

<http://www.myspace.com/valonkantajat>; <http://www.valonkantajat.com/>

Sentenced are no more... sadly. Even though their latest releases moved the band more towards a more mainstream-oriented and rockish music, their demise leaves a vacuum nonetheless. How to deal with their legacy and which part of it would be worth picking? The light-bearers – this is English for Valonkantajat – decided to take on this task and their first output re-awakes memories on this one gone band. Be it the melodies, be it the rhythms and the atmosphere the reference is so obvious that it hurts ... would it not ... would it not be for the song-writing to compensate this. A difference are the vocals, whose style is a clean voice and not the slightly death metal influenced as well as dark one Sentenced fans are familiar with. The compositions offer some fresh and nice take on this particular type of music.

Therefore, if you like the music once played by the Finnish band Sentenced – not their early and not their 'latest' – then Valonkantajat might be something for you. Even though their homepage is (still) in Finnish, you can contact them in English ... they will understand you.

A longer review will appear in the Metal Archives soon ...

Mysterium Tremendum – Mysterium Tremendum (2011)

(USA; Black, Death Metal)

9 Tracks (CD – Self-released) - _ - _ - (35:45)

<http://www.myspace.com/mysteriumtremendummetal>

A slight old-school interpretation of black metal can be found on the debut release of the American band 'Mysterium Tremendum'. Some keys appear in the background, calmer interludes can be found and also nice variation in terms of the guitars was used. The overall atmosphere is rather dark, but well crafted and avoids the clichés a lot of bands (desperately) struggle with. Folkish and Viking touches glimpse through now and then as well and even though the band keeps the not unnecessarily limited in terms of their approach. Tracks like 'The Blacksmith' and 'Blackened Peaks' are a lot of fun to listen to.

Even though these MP3s – damn you post service – spin in my player for some time now, I do not feel that they wear down in any meaningful way. Therefore, fans for catchy, icy and not too modern black metal with a variety of influences might want to give this band a try. They will not regret it.

A longer review will appear in the Metal Archives soon ...

And the CD has finally reached me. It only took six freaking weeks ... seems like we have reached the Stone Age again.

Hexentomb – Folgore Notturna (2010)

(Italy; Black Metal)

6 Tracks (CD – The Dread Lair) -_-_- (21:58)

<http://www.myspace.com/hexentomb>, <http://thedreadlair.vstore.ca/>

Once the two (!) – at least I perceive them as such – introductory tracks are over the Italian band Hexentomb unleashes a mixture of aggressive and calm black metal. As the fifth out of six is also more of a filler, fifty percent of this release gives the impression of attempting to divert the attention of the listener rather than focusing it. Anyway, aside from this the music follows in vein of the Norwegian black metal Satyricon, but combines the facets of the early as well as the recent era. As such, the music has a slightly sterile and mechanical touch but comes also with some melodic segments. Once the black metal is unleashed, keys tend to play no or only a minor role here.

Similar to their first output, also this one seems to be rather for those who have a fancy for a more modern interpretation of this extreme genre.

A longer review will appear in the Metal Archives soon ...

The something else section

Gamardah Fungus – Two Hemispheres, Two Worlds

(Ukraine; Experimental, Electronic, Drone, Ambient)

5 Tracks (CD – Turbinicarpus Records) -_-_- (58:36)

<http://www.myspace.com/turbinicarpus>, <http://www.myspace.com/gamardahfungus>

Five tracks on a CD, hidden from side through multiple layers of paper and inside some sort of handmade bag. Such would be the release Two Hemispheres, Two Worlds by the Ukrainian band Gamardah Fungus. Each of the compositions is discussed separately.

Burning Church Of Eternal Sorrow (12:38)

The opener of this release has a play of accords (resolution) as a main motive, which is accompanied by an additional guitar in the background. Later, a rather harsh interruption disrupts this peaceful scenery and a metal part takes over, while towards the end the opening motives appears again; now in slightly distorted manner, though.

Kurtulus (8:27)

Arabic vocals (?) recite a text, while in the background guitars and keys set a calm and sedative mood. Strange to listen to, especially as the context of the presentation remains hidden. Furthermore, sounds, which remind on the chirring of locusts, make an appearance as well. Imagine sitting on the riverside of the Nile, while in the background the unfamiliar noises of the Middle Eastern culture and the Egyptian environment impose themselves upon you.

Two Hemispheres, Two Worlds (9:35)

The opening is a continuation of the preceding track, but after a while, a guitar motive enters the scene and progresses considerably in intensity. Over the whole length the sound of water and a wind play (?) set the mood, but once half the track has passed, metal guitar takes over and everything progresses to some noisy texture towards the end.

Frozen Moon Rising (16:59)

Here, the switch between the 'calm' and the 'aggressive' motive takes place twice. Again, the contrast of normal guitars and metal ones appears and again samples of and textures play a crucial role.

Black Ode to White Cherub (10:57)

Compared with the previous four approaches, the closing one appears in a different manner. The difference in the 'worlds' is not as obvious as before, because the sounds were meshed together and try to 'fight it out' at the same time. Chants and bells have to compete with a noisy texture in the background. A clear distinction cannot be found over the entire length of this track.

The title suggests as much, "Two Hemispheres, Two Worlds", and it should be taken literally. While the music hovers through the air, it switches between a more guitar-oriented, and therefore heavier or more intensive music, to a calm ambient atmosphere. Not every composition shows this distinction, but the contrast between those extreme levels is an important facet nonetheless. What makes this CD interesting is the variation in the noises and sounds, the contrast or facets in which the music appears.

Can also be downloaded here (but you should try to get the physical copy):

<http://www.archive.org/details/GamardahFungustwoHemispheresTwoWorlds>

Apes Fight Back – Apes Fight Back

(United Kingdom; Punk)

3 Tracks (Sprayed 3" CDr – Noise Park Activities) - _ _ - (6:41)

<http://www.myspace.com/apesfightback>, <http://noiseparkactivities.blogspot.com/>

No, I did not buy this CDr for the music. I have a certain fancy for 3"CDRs and as this comes also spray-painted, I was quite curious and bought it along with a lot of other stuff. The music is punk and might fascinate those who have a fancy for experimental stuff. While the opener is still straightforward stuff, the second and the third one come with strange breaks. Rather on higher tempo, the music is quite listenable, even though those six minutes are over all too soon. Good for occasional listening.

Advertisements

Reality Impaired Records

(USA)

realityimpairedrec (at) yahoo (dot) com

a label for noise, ambient, metal and such. Pretty weird shit at times, but Stan has some great pieces in his distro

Dokuro

(Italy)

<http://dokuro.it/>

focus is rather on experimental music: ambient and noise in a variety of facets. Releases are quite limited

Artilleria Pesada

(Andorra)

<http://a-pesada.blogspot.com/>

Noise, grindcore, ambient and a lot of extreme stuff ... such is offered by this label. You should really check out Soizu!

Hellhouse 666

(Thailand)

<http://www.hellhouse666.cjb.net/>

Sick label from Thailand with a lot of underground shit. A lot of tapes! Black Metal and such ...

R.O.N.F. Records

(Spain)

<http://www.ronfrecords.com/>

A noise label. They have released a Soizu DVD and an O.D.I. CD (Necronomicon II) lately. It should be noted that O.D.I. has been covered several times in this magazine already and for good reasons.

Puzzle Records

(Germany)

<http://puzzlerecords.blogspot.com/>

Electronics, noise, drone, metal and a lot of weird stuff. The releases are generally limited to small numbers. DIY stuff ...

Webbed Hand Records

(USA)

<http://webbedhandrecords.com/>

A good netlabel from the USA. Dig through their catalogue and discover some great music. Ambient, drone and noise stuff.

Skull Fucking Metal

(Canada)

<http://skullfuckingmetal.blogspot.com/>

similar to RIR, but even sicker and more stranger. Tons and tons of crazy stuff in the distro

Dark Meadow Recordings

(United Kingdom)

<http://www.darkmeadowrecordings.com/>

CDs and free downloads, such can be found on the label's homepage. It is a rather young one. The music ranges from noise, over ambient, over experimental over drone over metal.

Ludah Productions

(Indonesia)

<http://www.myspace.com/ludahproduction>

Black and death metal label from Indonesia.

DNA Collective

(Italy)

<http://dnanetlabel.altervista.org/>

Handmade releases!!! and some really cool downloads on their site. Ambient, noise, experimental and also a bit black metal. Interview in the 11th edition of this magazine.

Slow Death Records

(France)

<http://slowdeathrecords.blogspot.com/>

This label is specialized on harsh Noise Wall and they spread releases of this extreme kind of music on a continuous basis. Not for the weak hearted.

Noise Park Activities

(Austria)

<http://noiseparkactivities.blogspot.com/>

Diy, diy, diy ... and even more diy ... Noise and a lot of strange music can be found in this distro.

Free Albums blog

(???)

<http://freealbums.blogsome.com/>

A sit which is dedicated to free downloads of music from all kinds of genres.

Set Productions

(Egypt)

<http://setproductions.web.officelive.com/>

A metal label from Egypt. Focus on a variety of genres and styles.

Methadol

(France – Hard Rock / Heavy Metal)

<http://www.myspace.com/methadol>

Their second release was spread not very long ago ... get it. Interview in the 11th edition of the magazine.

Forbidden Music

(Italy)

forbiddenmusic@hotmail.it

Underground label from Italy with some strange releases from small scenes. No homepage.

Demo Archives

<http://www.demoarchives.com/>

If you are interested in rare metal demos, this is the place to do some research.

Bouq

(Jordan – Black Metal, Folk)

<http://www.bouq-band.com/>

A rather unconventional metal band from Jordan. Their music is surprisingly well produced and has also some Middle Eastern arrangements.

Unspeakable Vault of Doom

<http://www.goominet.com/unspeakable-vault/>

For Lovecraft fanatics. Check out the blog!

Death Invoker

(Peru – Death Thrash Metal)

<http://www.deathinvoker666.blogspot.com/>

Sick music ... what else do you expect from this region, hm?

Earstroke

(USA)

<http://www.earstroke.com/>

They have a new release out and the Skytree one is still available, which is a shame, but it is quite good.

Kaoteon

(Lebanon – Death / Black Metal, Grindcore)

<http://www.myspace.com/kaoteon>

Well ... who does not know this band? They have unleashed a new barrage of metal and it comes with a considerable heaviness and power. You should really check it out.

Jozik Records

(Finland)

<http://jozikrecords.blogspot.com/>

Experimental music, nice looking releases and a small distro can be found on the homepage of this Finnish label.

Kosmokrater

(USA – Old-school and underground black metal)

<http://www.myspace.com/kosmokratermusic>

Sick shit ... check out their MySpace site. A new Astrum release is also forthcoming (more professional old-school/punk black metal project)

Free Metal Albums

<http://www.freemetalalbums.com/>

Nomen est omen.

Vital Weekly

<http://www.vitalweekly.net/>

Mandatory newsletter if you are interested in experimental stuff.

Erevos

(Greece – Black Metal)

<http://www.myspace.com/erevos666>

They have just released their debut “Descensus Ad Inferos”. A review and interview done by me might be forthcoming. Well crafted music.

The Lovecraftsman

<http://www.thelovecraftsman.com/>

The name says everything ...

Devotional Hymns

(Netherlands)

<http://www.devotionalhymns.com/>

Mories – the guy behind Gnaw Their Tongues and other bands – has started his own label. Guess what kind of music you can find there?

Little Somebody Records

(USA)

<http://www.myspace.com/littlesomebody>

<http://littlesomebodyfamily.bandcamp.com/>

Wonderful label ... beautiful releases. Why the hell are they so inactive? Visit the bandcamp site to listen to the albums!

AVR Label

(Montenegro)

<http://adzove-vrbe-records.blog.hr/>

Underground label from a very small scene. The guy has also a magazine: Zapisnik.

Sources poems:

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Devil_%E2%80%94_had_he_fidelity
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7388/7388.txt>

Sources pictures:

<http://www.archive.org/details/cu31924020549584>
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Outlook

90 pages ... again? Most certainly not ...

Interviews with small and unknown bands ... there are a lot out there.

A larger focus on noise. I have something in mind, but this needs some carefully planning.

Poems

More reviews

And strange pictures ... again...

